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# HOUSING CONDITIONS IN JERSEY CITY

BY

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## PREFACE

This monograph is the report of an investigation made by the writer during a residence for an academic year as fellow of the College Settlements Association at Whittier House Social Settlement in Jersey City. The plan pursued was that of investigating certain clearly defined representative districts,—that is, of making a systematic inspection of every house occupied by two or more families within those districts, and of interviewing every family within every such house. The carrying out of this plan was interfered with by the refusal of four owners, covering ten houses, to permit investigation of their premises; by the refusal of a few families here and there to give information; and by the impossibility of investigating certain other apartments owing to the regular absence of the occupants during the day at work. With these exceptions, the plan was carried out as originally conceived. Five hundred and thirty-nine houses were investigated, and statistics gathered in regard to 2,286 apartments,—98 per cent of all occupied apartments in the houses investigated. The schedules used in the investigation are printed in the appendix.

The work proceeded under the general direction of the Fellowship Committee of the College Settlements Association and of Miss Cornelia F. Bradford, headworker of Whittier House, all of whom rendered every assistance in their power. Especially valuable were Miss Bradford's influence in Jersey City and her advice and encouragement during the progress of the work. Mr. Lawrence Veiller, formerly secretary of the New York Tenement House Commission of 1900 and now deputy commissioner of the Tenement House Department of New York, gave most generous help in preparing the schedules and in advising as to districts to be investigated and methods to be pursued. Thanks are also due to Mr. Albert L. Webster, C. E., who kindly explained many points in regard to sanitary inspection, and to Dr. McGill, president of the Board of Health of Jersey City, who permitted the use of the department badge during the investigation.

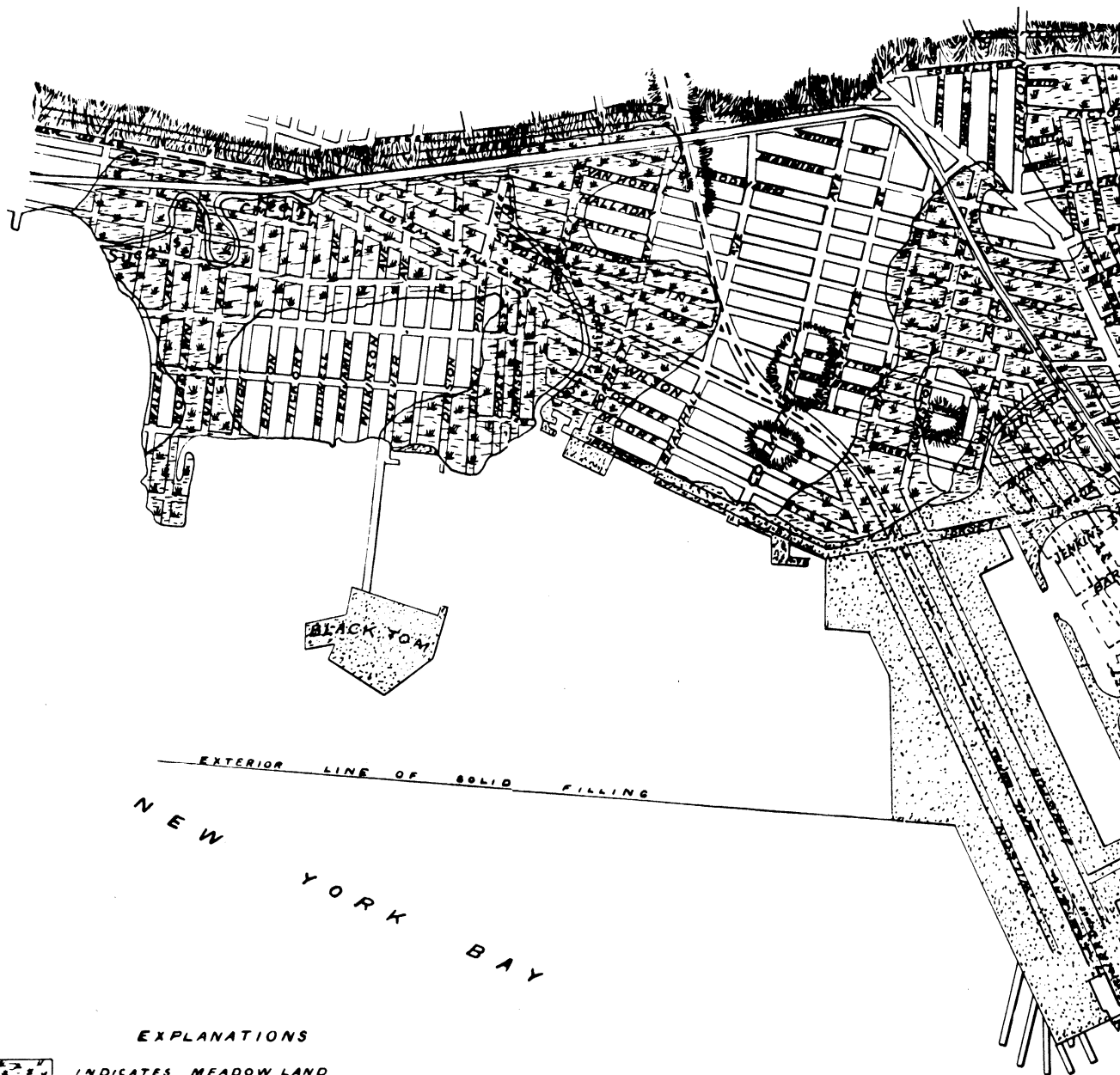
*September, 1902.*

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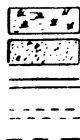
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# EXPLANATIONS



- INDICATES MEADOW LAND
- " LAND RECLAIMED FROM SEA
- " GRADED STREETS
- " PROPOSED STREETS
- " RAIL ROADS

MAP OF LOWER JERSEY CITY SHOWING BOUNDARIES OF ORIGINAL LAND, OF FIL

From Sanitary and Topographical Map of Hudson Co., N. J., prepared for the National Board of Health in 1886



NAL LAND, OF FILLED-IN MARSH LAND, AND OF LAND RECLAIMED FROM THE SEA.

board of Health in 1880 by Spielman & Brush, C. E. The three districts investigated are indicated and numbered.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

It is doubtful whether there is to be found in the United States, outside of New York, a more serious housing problem, in proportion to the size of the community, than exists in Jersey City. The curse of the metropolis, the double-decker dumbbell tenement, with its five, six, or seven stories, its twenty-eight-inch air shaft and its overcrowded lot, has, it is true, as yet hardly gained a foothold in Jersey City; and the narrow, crooked alleys and back streets which constitute so serious a part of the problem in Chicago, Philadelphia, and other American cities are here almost unknown. But one need not do more than walk along any one of a score of representative side streets, observing the swarming foreign life which overflows them; or stumble up the dark stairs of some typical tenement house, amid mingled odors which defy analysis, and glance into equally dark and unventilated rooms; or grope one's way through some dark passage or arched alleyway leading to rows of rear houses with their shallow yards, rendered offensive by foul odors, to be convinced that a most serious housing problem, involving the health and comfort of thousands of human beings, awaits solution in Jersey City.

Nor does one need more than to glance over the city ordinances whose enforcement rests with the Departments of Health and Buildings, to learn that no adequate and effective power of regulation of tenement house conditions has been entrusted to these bodies. Moreover, only a slight acquaintance with the residents either of "the Hill" or of the tenement house districts is needed to teach one that there is a lack of realization, among the cultivated and wealthy, of the need of reform and a lack of realization among the uneducated and struggling, of the possibility and the means of securing reform. To these failures to realize needs and possibilities is mainly due the continuance of present conditions.

That such conditions have come to exist at all is in the last analysis traceable to the same general cause. The absence of regu-

lation has permitted owners of property to build solely with an eye to future profits. They have been at liberty to cover whatever percentage of their lots they pleased; and examples of the results which have followed this freedom may be seen within a stone's throw of the Post Office on Washington street, where there are two buildings, a single tenement house and a corner block building, each of which covers the entire lot on which it stands. The observer of those buildings will do well to picture to himself the conditions which would prevail if a block, or half a block, were to be built up solidly in such fashion. Owners have been permitted to provide in whatever way seemed fitting to them for the lighting and ventilation of rooms; and as a result hundreds of houses can be pointed out where not a single bed room opens to the outer air, and scores where not even a transom, still less a window, opens from bed rooms to living rooms. Owners have been required to accede to only the haziest and most elastic of requirements in respect to sanitary arrangements; nearly every ordinance prescribing details ending with the words, "or otherwise as the Department . . . may require." As a result we find, practically without exception throughout large districts, cellar floors of earth, damp, ill-smelling and frequently flooded, and privy vaults choked or unsewered and so located as to be equally offensive to tenants and neighbors. Builders have been permitted, until within very recent years, to erect four and five-story buildings, planned for the occupancy of a dozen or more families above the ground floor, without providing any means of escape in case of fire; and may even yet put up such buildings with fire-escape provision for but one or two families out of four, and with the most reckless disregard of provision against the spread of fire. Back of all this absence of regulation and the resulting evils may always be observed the same fundamental cause; a public indifference, due chiefly to a failure to realize conditions and dangers.

Such is the situation, its cause, and the direction in which we are to look for cure. All reformatory efforts must be based not only on a study of solutions which have been worked out for other communities, but on the closest study of local evils and needs. A hasty survey of conditions may convince the observer of the need of reform, but is likely to produce little in the way of practical results. While the laws in any community are to be judged, and the char-

acter of the new laws needed determined, by the worst conditions permitted to exist there, nevertheless, to go through a city selecting, bit by bit, the worst conditions to be found, and to present the data so gathered as a study of the housing conditions of that city, would be to do injustice to residents of the city as a whole, to tenement house owners and dwellers, and to municipal authorities. An investigation to discover facts must precede an intelligent effort for reform; and in making such an investigation, districts of sufficient size must be chosen, and must be investigated with sufficient thoroughness, to ensure the representative character of the results.

An effort has been made to give this investigation a representative character, although it was necessarily limited in scope, as it was undertaken single-handed and was, under the conditions of the College Settlements Association fellowship, confined to a single academic year. The main objects throughout have been to furnish data upon which a movement for reform in legislation and for more adequate provision for administration might safely base its demands; and to vitalize the facts presented so as to awaken in the citizens of Jersey City a realization of needs, a sense of personal responsibility, and an enthusiasm which shall seek to express itself not only in legislative reform but in voluntary organized effort for betterment of conditions. Both the enactment and enforcement of laws are dependent on such a spirit—not sporadically aroused and spasmodically exerted, only to lapse again into inertia and indifference, but constantly, steadily, persistently expressing itself in educational effort and practical activity.

As may be seen by reference to the schedules used in the investigation, which are printed in the appendix, data were gathered not only in regard to the houses themselves, but in regard to the occupants;—their numbers, ages (between certain limits), nationalities, occupations and length of residence in the United States being recorded. A knowledge of these points is essential to such an understanding of the situation as must precede effective private effort to improve conditions; but in order not to obscure the main question of housing reform the tables of nationalities, occupations, etc., have been presented in one of the later chapters.

Three districts, comprising in all seventeen blocks, were covered by the investigation.<sup>1</sup> Of these the first and largest district includes

<sup>1</sup> For the location of the districts investigated see accompanying map of Jersey City.

the eight blocks bounded by Sussex and Essex and by Van Vorst and Hudson streets, together with two others adjoining, extending between Hudson and Greene to Grand, and between Van Vorst and Warren to Dudley street. The widest range of conditions, as might be expected from its relative size, is to be found in this district. From the comfortable well-built dwellings of Sussex street, only recently converted to tenement house uses, and still in a large proportion of cases unaltered, to the four- and five-story brick tenements and the huddled rear houses of Morris and Essex streets, every type and grade of house is represented. The population of the district is overwhelmingly foreign. Only 18 per cent of the 1,278 families interviewed were of American stock, while in some of the blocks south of Morris street the percentage falls as low as 11 per cent. The foreign elements most largely represented are the Polish and Russian, who together lead with 28 per cent; the Germans who follow with 20 per cent, and the Irish with 18 per cent. Twenty other nationalities are represented, but as the most numerous, the Jewish, is represented by but thirty-two families, no one of them forms an important element numerically in the population.

The industrial attractions which have brought together this foreign population are not far to seek. The great American Sugar Refinery looms conspicuously on the southern boundary of the district; numerous other factories and workshops are interspersed through the blocks; while to the north, within a few minutes' walk, lies the Pennsylvania Railroad, and to the south, across a narrow strip of water, stretch the docks of the Central Railroad of New Jersey. The foreign population shows, as was to be expected, a heavy preponderance of factory hands, railroad employees, and long-shoremen.

The second district includes the two blocks bounded by Railroad avenue and Morgan street and by Henderson and Warren streets, and two others adjoining, extending between Provost and Henderson to Bay street and between Morgan and Bay to Grove street. Bounded to the south by the Pennsylvania Railroad's elevated tracks, stretching out toward the Erie Railroad, and hedged in towards the Hudson by factories, foundries and workshops, it offers to the immigrant almost the same inducements of employment as does District I, and presents an even larger percentage of foreign-born inhabitants. Of the 637 families whose apartments were inves-

tigated, over 14 per cent were Americans, nearly 40 per cent were Polish, 18 per cent Irish, 11 per cent Italians and nearly 4 per cent Germans. Among the remaining families the Jewish lead, numbering 16.

The houses of this district correspond with the older and more neglected portion of District I, showing, however, a larger proportion of wooden buildings and a smaller proportion of high tenements.

District III, consisting of the three blocks bounded by First and Second and by Monmouth and Merseles streets, is located farther from the business centre of the city and from the water front, near the foot of the hill on which are situated most of the better-class resident districts. It lies in the heart of what is known as Little Italy—the most distinctively national section of the city, and the most dilapidated and neglected. Sixty-five per cent of the 377 families interviewed were Italians, and their manner of packing themselves solidly where once they enter into possession gives to the southern half of the district, with the blocks adjoining, an intensely foreign aspect. The remaining 35 per cent, among whom the Irish, the American with 10 per cent, and the German nationalities predominate, are interspersed chiefly on the northern side of the blocks, along Second street.

Rival attractions to the railroads, factories and docks, which claim so large a part of the population in the other two districts, are here offered by the dump-grounds adjacent. Irregular heavy laboring work is, however, the predominating occupation among the Italians, though the rag-picker and junk-dealer are frequently found, as well as the omnipresent factory hand.

So much for the characteristics of the separate districts. For the remainder of the report, the houses and the population will be dealt with, in the main, without regard to district lines.

## CHAPTER II

### STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOUSES

#### *Nature of the Housing Problem in Jersey City*

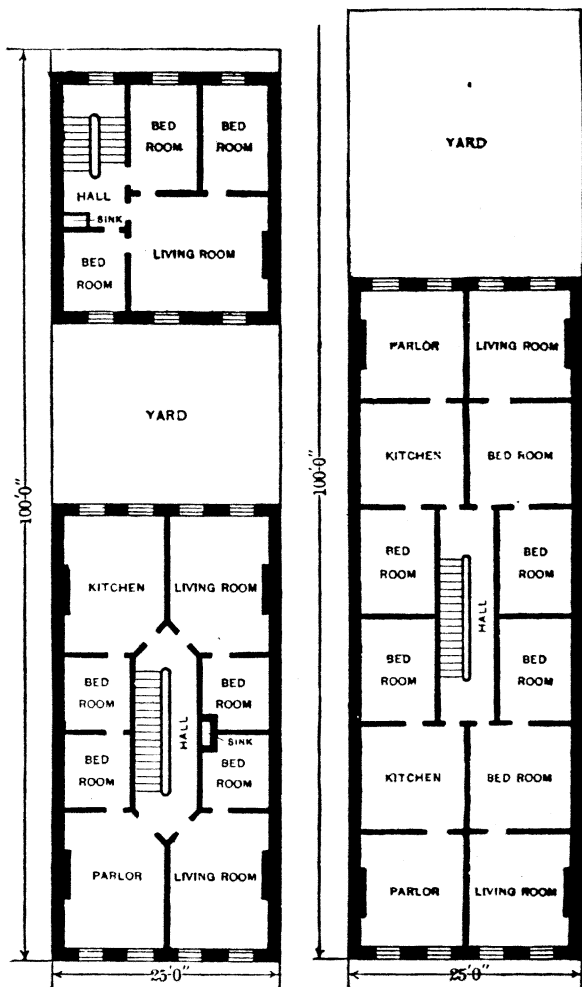
Before proceeding to the consideration of special evils of construction, maintenance and occupancy it is necessary to get clearly in mind the precise nature of the housing problem in Jersey City. To this end let us glance for a moment at the various types of buildings in which the working people of the city are housed. In certain limited sections of the lower city and very generally on outlying portions of the hill, small one-family frame houses are in use; the great mass of the laboring population, however, is housed in three-, four- and five-story buildings accommodating three or more families each. These houses, which by the generally accepted definition are tenement houses, together with houses accommodating but two families,—which as not essentially differing from the three-family tenements were included in this investigation,—belong to several distinct types. There is first the old private dwelling, generally of brick, with a basement. Such a house, when converted to tenement uses, may furnish either the best or the worst of accommodations. If it was originally well built and has been kept in good repair; if it is occupied by but one family on a floor, and the basement is rented with the parlor floor and thus not used for sleeping purposes; if it is provided with proper water closet and bathing facilities, and if the room partitions are left unchanged so that all the rooms open directly to the outer air, no better ventilated or lighted, no healthier or pleasanter home can be found by the tenement house dweller. But where little interior bed rooms are cut out of the large front and rear rooms on each floor; where the house is owned by an absentee landlord and managed by an agent interested only in getting the rent, or having passed into the hands of an ignorant foreigner who occupies one of the apartments and is in no way superior to the rest of the tenants, falls into bad repair and is dirty and ill-kept; and where the basement is occupied as the sole living quarters of a family, these one-time respectable residences become as objectionable as the worst type of house built expressly for tenement uses.

A smaller and less pretentious type of private dwelling, the frame house originally standing on the rear of its lot with a long yard extending to the street, has now very generally become the rickety and overcrowded rear tenement of the worst districts.

The predominating type of tenement, however, is the house built from twenty to fifty years ago expressly for a tenement house. Such a house has commonly two apartments, not infrequently three or four, on each floor. Its four or six rooms of depth from street to yard on each side of the central hall are in some cases occupied by but one family, in others divided into two apartments of two or three rooms each. The interior rooms are generally lighted by windows, averaging between three and four square feet in area, opening upon living rooms or halls. In some cases small oblong or triangular shafts with an area of from four to twenty square feet furnish a certain amount of air and light to the occupants of the top floor apartments and give semi-darkness, shading to absolute blackness to those on the floors below, together with a varied assortment of odors from the kitchens and bed rooms of neighbors. Where tenants are foolish enough to keep windows on such shafts open, the air breathed is likely to be distinctly worse than where each apartment depends for ventilation on its own outer windows; since no intake at the bottom of the shaft provides a draught, and the air in the narrow space, loaded with foul gases and bacteria, remains unchanged from day to day. The suggestive name of culture tubes, applied to such shafts in other cities, suggests the serious menace to health which physicians and chemists unite in ascribing to these stagnant air wells. The accompanying plans of tenement houses prepared, as typical of New York conditions, for the Tenement House Committee of 1894, are no less descriptive of conditions in Jersey City. Figures 1, 2 and 3 are here the commonest types. A very few houses were found which approximated in arrangement of shafts, etc., the dumbbell tenements numbered 5 and 6; though of these few covered quite so large a percentage of the lot as do those represented.

In certain other and newer sections of the city, however, overcrowding of lots by single deep houses is far more common. Thus in the block bounded by Henderson and Grove streets and by Second and Third streets there are nineteen four- and five-story tenements each of which covers over 70 per cent of its lot—the prescribed

## TYPES OF TENEMENT HOUSES:



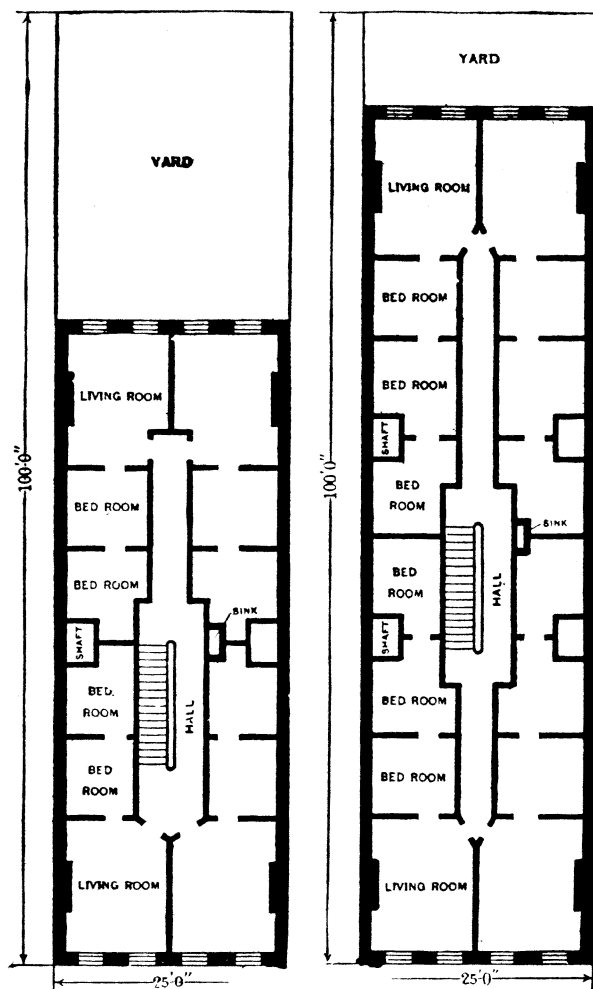
1. Front and rear house on one lot.

2. Type of tenement house without light or ventilation, except in outside rooms.

<sup>3</sup>From Report of New York Tenement House Committee of 1894.



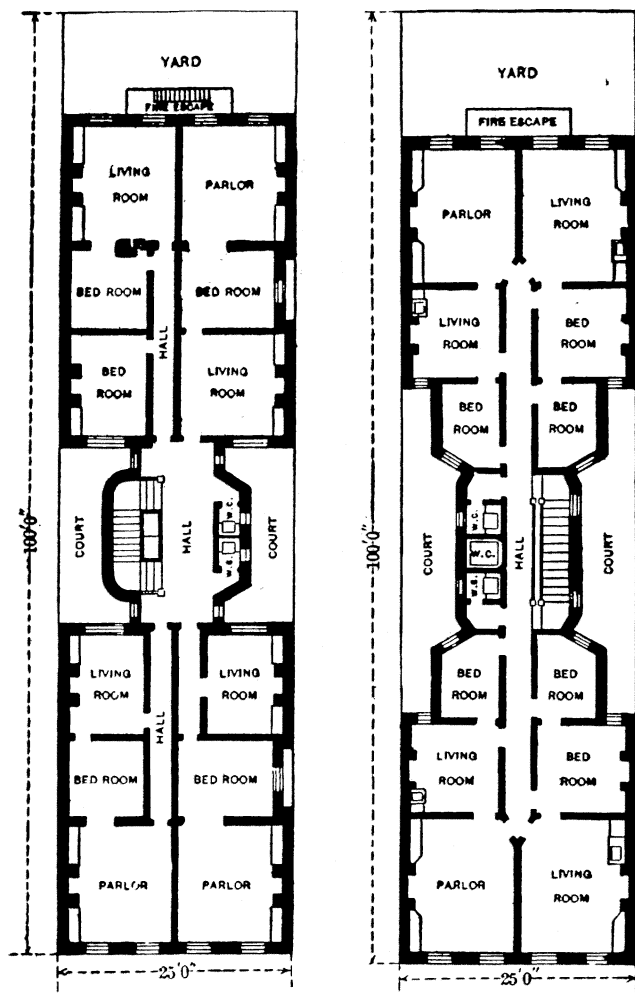
TYPES OF TENEMENT HOUSES.<sup>3</sup>



3. Type of tenement showing introduction of air shaft.

4. Double-decker covering 90 per cent of lot. Common type in New York; less common in Jersey City

<sup>3</sup> From Report of New York Tenement House Committee of 1894.

TYPES OF TENEMENT HOUSES.<sup>4</sup>

5 and 6. Modern types of tenements common in New York and beginning to appear in Jersey City.

<sup>4</sup> From Report of New York Tenement House Committee, 1894.

maximum percentage which may be covered in New York. Two six-story tenements, over eighty feet deep, on lower Sussex street, will also repay investigation for those wishing to acquaint themselves with the newer tenement house evils; for their four apartments to a floor, their dark inner rooms and their eighteen-inch-wide air shafts make them typical of the extreme modern tendency which has of late years gained the ascendancy in New York.

Such houses are happily, however, still exceptional in Jersey City as a whole. The drawings 4, 5 and 6 are therefore given not so much as representing conditions at present prevalent in Jersey City as because they show what has been the tendency in the development of tenement house construction in New York, and what we may not without reason expect will prove to be the tendency in Jersey City unless the needed legislative checks are imposed. In this connection it is interesting to note the opinion of Mr. Lawrence Veiller, formerly secretary of the New York Tenement House Commission of 1900, and now deputy commissioner of the Tenement House Department of New York City, that "the present type of tenement house—the six-story double-decker, occupying 75 per cent of a twenty-five foot lot, with four families on a floor, gives to its occupants less light and less ventilation, less fire protection and less comfortable surroundings, than the average tenement of fifty years ago, which was lower in height, occupied less lot space and sheltered fewer families."<sup>5</sup> This saying the citizens of Jersey City may well take to themselves, not by any means as affording consolation that the situation here is less serious than that across the river, but as a warning that bad as it is, it is still capable of being made worse unless effective regulation of tenement houses hereafter erected is established. It is well also that we should realize that not the most respectable of exteriors, that not even the best of housekeeping, can make a healthful and home-like dwelling where sunless interior rooms are the rule.

It is true, and it is a fact of importance to those who contemplate securing reform in Jersey City housing conditions, that tenement house construction here does not go on at any thing like the rate common to New York and other rapidly growing communities. This fact should make it comparatively easy at the present time to secure the needed legislation in regard to tenement houses hereafter

<sup>5</sup> "Report of Tenement House Commission," New York, 1900.

erected, since the presence in the community of few prospective builders should mean a comparatively slight opposition to such legislation. On the other hand, it should cause the public spirited citizen to throw himself with the greater zeal into the effort to solve the even more perplexing and intricate problems of regulation for existing houses, since only by this means can any considerable immediate improvement in conditions be wrought.

### *Classifications of Houses Investigated*

The following tables give certain preliminary classifications of houses by materials, number of stories, number of apartments contained and location—whether rear or front houses; and a classification of apartments by the number of rooms contained.

TABLE I.—HOUSES CLASSIFIED BY MATERIALS AND AS FRONT AND REAR HOUSES

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	WOODEN HOUSES.			BRICK HOUSES.			Total Front Houses.	Total Rear Houses.	Total Houses.
	Front.	Rear.	Total.	Front.	Rear.	Total.			
I.— 1 . . . .	11	4	15	6	0	6	17	4	21
2 . . . .	18	9	27	2	1	3	20	10	30
3 . . . .	16	6	22	15	0	15	31	6	37
4 . . . .	3	1	4	16	2	18	19	3	22
5 . . . .	1	3	4	27	3	30	28	6	34
6 . . . .	4	0	4	26	1	27	30	1	31
7 . . . .	3	1	4	22	1	23	25	2	27
8 . . . .	3	1	4	20	1	21	23	2	25
9 . . . .	5	1	6	13	0	13	18	1	19
10 . . . .	5	2	7	10	3	13	15	5	20
II.— 1 . . . .	34	5	39	14	0	14	48	5	53
2 . . . .	34	3	37	14	0	14	48	3	51
3 . . . .	3	1	4	23	0	23	26	1	27
4 . . . .	15	7	22	12	1	13	27	8	35
III.— 1 . . . .	18	0	18	0	0	0	18	0	18
2 . . . .	28	5	33	5	0	5	33	5	38
3 . . . .	35	13	48	3	0	3	38	13	51
All districts .	236	62	298	228	13	241	464	75	539

It will be noted that over one-half (54.6 per cent) of all the houses investigated are of wood. This is probably a somewhat larger percentage of wooden houses than would be found in Jersey City as a whole, as in the investigation the older and more neglected sections were largely represented, in which sections wooden houses predominate.

Three-story houses are seen to be most common, constituting 37.1 per cent,—with three-story and basement houses, 51.5 per cent

TABLE 2.—HOUSES CLASSIFIED BY NUMBER OF STORIES

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	Under Two Stories.	Two Stories and Two Stories and Basement.	Three Stories and Three Stories and Basement.	Four Stories and Four Stories and Basement.	Five Stories.	Six Stories.	Total Number of Houses.
I.—1		1	11	9			21
2	I	2	19	8			30
3		2	21	12	2		37
4		1	6	15			22
5			18	13	3		34
6		3	15	10	3		31
7		1	11	8	7		27
8		2	14	4	5		25
9		1	13	2	2	I	19
10		1	8	9	2		20
II.—1		2	27	24			53
2		3	34	14			51
3		1	17	9			27
4		7	14	12	2		35
III.—1		7	11				18
2		7	25	6			38
3	I	14	25	11			51
All districts..	2	55	289	166	26	I	539

of all. Four-story houses follow with 31.5 per cent, while of five-story houses there are but twenty-six, or 4.8 per cent.

TABLE 3.—HOUSES CLASSIFIED BY NUMBERS OF APARTMENTS CONTAINED

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	2 Apts.	3 Apts.	4 Apts.	5 Apts.	6 Apts.	7 Apts.	8 Apts.	9 Apts.	10 Apts.	11 Apts.	12 Apts.	Over 12 Apts.	Total of Houses.
I.—1	2	3	6	1	7		2						21
2	2	8	7	3	7	2	1						30
3	10	5	6	0	9	3	2	I			I		37
4	0	8	0	2	3		1	I	3	2		2	22
5	2	7	6	4	3	5	5	I		I			34
6	1	5	7	2	6	4	2	I	I			2	31
7	2	5	2	2	1	6	5		3			I	27
8	1	5	7	1	6		2				I	2	25
9	1	5	5	2	1	2	I					2	19
10	1	5	1	4	2	2	5						20
II.—1	3	12	13	6	9	6	3			I			53
2	7	17	7	9	6	2	2					I	51
3	3	12	6	1	3	1				I			27
4	10	6	0	4	8	3	4						35
III.—1	7	3	2	2	3		I						18
2	8	9	3	6	7	1	3	I					38
3	13	17	8	4	8			I					51
All districts .....	73	132	86	53	89	37	39	6	7	5	2	10	539

The average number of apartments per house is 4.88. Three apartment houses are most common, forming 24.5 per cent of the

total number; four apartment houses make up 15.9 per cent; 46.0 per cent, or nearly half of the houses, contain five or more apartments, while a considerable number contain over ten sets of rooms, and some few twenty or more apartments.

TABLE 4.—APARTMENTS CLASSIFIED BY NUMBERS OF ROOMS CONTAINED.

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	One Room.	Two Rooms.	Three Rooms.	Four Rooms.	Five Rooms.	Six Rooms.	Over Six Rooms.	Total Number of Apartments.
I.—1.....	0	6	46	30	2	1	1	86
2.....	0	24	43	36	0	7	1	111
3.....	0	16	65	60	8	4	7	160
4.....	2	9	73	37	2	6	2	131
5.....	1	32	53	32	36	16	3	173
6.....	1	22	78	35	10	6	0	152
7.....	0	9	55	68	24	5	2	163
8.....	3	20	36	47	6	4	3	119
9.....	0	12	47	24	6	1	3	93
10.....	1	9	34	34	4	6	0	88
II.—1.....	2	20	144	39	4	15	1	225
2.....	4	21	101	36	13	8	1	184
3.....	0	8	39	29	13	4	1	94
4.....	1	16	53	38	22	3	0	133
III.—1.....	0	10	32	9	0	2	0	53
2.....	1	28	64	34	25	3	2	157
3.....	0	17	80	54	6	6	1	164
All districts..	16	279	1,943	642	181	97	28	2,286

The classification of apartments by the number of rooms contained, shows that three room apartments are by far the most common, 45.6 per cent of apartments containing that number of rooms. Next come four room apartments with 28.0 per cent, and two room apartments with 12.2 per cent. The average number of rooms per apartment is 3.4. Six room and five room apartments are not uncommon in the better districts. The one room apartment so common in many foreign cities and in this country especially characteristic of Baltimore, is in Jersey City almost unknown.

#### *Rear Tenements and Overcrowding of Lots.*

The subject of rear tenements requires somewhat more explanation. From Table 1 14 per cent of all the houses investigated are seen to fall into this class. These figures, however, give little idea of the real aspect of things; since several blocks contain no rear houses at all, while in others the number of such houses rises as high as eight or ten.

It should not be supposed that a tenement house, merely because it stands at the rear of its lot, is necessarily any worse than the house on the front of the same lot. The type of house, its state of repair, and the distance from it to the front house and to buildings on adjoining lots, must all be taken into account in judging of such a house. The rear house represented in Figure I, belongs to the least obnoxious type—that which furnishes but one apartment of three or four rooms on each floor. Quite as frequently in Jersey City two families occupy each floor, and dark interior bed rooms are common; and where, as in many cases, such houses stand back to back with rows of similar houses on the next street, only three feet or so intervening between their rear lines, and are dependent for light and air upon a twenty-foot yard half occupied by privies and darkened by crossing and recrossing lines of clothes, it will readily be seen that their occupants suffer from various special evils in addition to those which equally affect the tenants in the front house. It is probable that could we compare the mortality statistics for rear houses with those for the city as a whole, we should find, as was found in New York a few years ago, that a startlingly large proportion of their inhabitants, especially of children under two years old, die each year; a fact which earned for some of the worst of these rear houses in New York the name of "infant slaughter houses."<sup>6</sup>

TABLE 5.—LOTS CLASSIFIED BY PERCENTAGE COVERED BY DWELLINGS.

DISTRICT.	Less than 60 Per Cent.	60 to 70 Per Cent.	70 to 80 Per Cent.	80 to 90 Per Cent.	90 to 100 Per Cent.	100 Per Cent.	Total Number of Lots.
I .....	96	41	23	6	3	22	191
II .....	89	26	13	7	5	11	151
III .....	77	3	6	1	0	4	91
All districts .....	262	70	42	14	8	37	433

It may be well to note some facts in regard to the percentage of lots covered by dwellings. Of the 433 lots, the houses upon which were measured, 39.4 per cent, as will be seen from Table 5, were covered 60 per cent or more, while 23.7 per cent were covered 70 per cent or more. Taking as our standard for the present the limit which has been established for New York—70 per cent

<sup>6</sup> "A Ten Years' War," by Jacob A. Riis.

—(though 65 per cent would be a better one), we may note that of the lots overcrowded beyond this limit a large proportion are occupied by front and rear houses. A considerable number also are shallow lots at the ends of blocks; so that comparatively little overcrowding of lots is due to very deep single houses. Examples already cited, however, sufficiently indicate that the present tendency is toward the construction of deeper houses than even a very moderate legal requirement should permit. Nothing said above should, of course, be construed as meaning that overcrowding of lots by front and rear houses is any less serious than overcrowding by a single large house. A prohibition which shall prevent for the future the building of a tenement house on the front or rear of a lot on which one such house already stands is greatly needed in Jersey City. One need only note the large numbers of wooden tenements standing at the rear of their lots with long yards extending to the streets, to realize how many are the opportunities for future overcrowding by this means, and how urgent the need of putting a stop to it.

### *Lighting and Ventilation*

In regard to lighting and ventilation of rooms, little is needed beyond a recapitulation of the points already brought out in the discussion of structural types, reinforced by a citation of certain facts which emphasize the evil and indicate more precisely its actual extent. With the exception of those in a few of the higher houses, nearly all the kitchens and general living rooms open directly upon the street or yard and are thus adequately lighted. In the converted dwellings, and in all houses occupied by but one family on each floor, a large proportion of bedrooms also open to the outer air. But in the three- or four-story buildings erected originally for tenement uses, and furnishing accommodations for two or more families on a floor, light bedrooms are more nearly the exception than the rule. The typical interior room is lighted by a window on the outer living room or on the public hall, these windows seldom having more than five square feet of glazed surface, and more frequently an area of from three to four square feet.

Light and air shafts were found in only a small proportion of the houses investigated; and a light and air shaft which is anything more than the merest travesty of its respectable name is emphati-



cally an exception. The typical shaft is a triangular or oblong niche in the outer wall,—in the latter case, perhaps ten feet long and eighteen inches deep, in the former frequently a triangle with a base of not more than four feet and an altitude of a foot and a half. An occasional variation is found in a square shaft of about the same average area let into the interior of the house and covered in most cases by a skylight. Below the top story none of these shafts furnish any appreciable amount of light, while tenants very generally bore witness that windows upon them were carefully kept closed, a method of procedure of whose wisdom a single whiff of air from between the pent up walls will convince one.

TABLE 6.—DARK AND BADLY VENTILATED ROOMS CLASSIFIED BY SOURCE OF LIGHT

DISTRICT.	ROOMS HAVING WINDOWS ON		Rooms Having no Windows.	Total.
	Shafts.	Other Rooms or Halls.		
I .....	266	710	226	1,202
II .....	28	338	151	517
III .....	34	151	46	231
All districts .....	328	1,199	423	1,950

By reference to Table 6 it will be seen that 1,199 rooms lighted only by windows on other rooms or halls were noted in the course of the investigation; while—a still more serious evil—423 rooms were noted which had no window at all, and frequently not even a transom opening into another room. Three hundred and twenty-eight rooms dependent for light and ventilation upon air shafts, or upon a combination of windows on air shafts and rooms or halls, were also found. Some few of these—in general, those in top floor apartments—are on sunny days for some hours fairly light; most of them, however, vary from gloomy to very dark. It should also be noted that more than 150 other rooms escape being equally dark only because owing to the position or height of adjoining buildings, or because the next lot is vacant, shafts in outer walls stand open. Of the many dark rooms noted which had indeed outer windows, but outer windows opening upon narrow alleyways between houses, or spaces of three feet or so between rows of rear houses, no account has been taken. The total of 1,950 inner rooms inadequately lighted and ventilated may therefore be taken as an exceed-

ingly conservative estimate of the actual number of dark rooms. This number constitutes 24.4 per cent of the total number of rooms. As nearly all of these dark rooms are bedrooms, and as bedrooms constitute slightly more than two-thirds of the total number of rooms, it is evident that from 30 to 40 per cent of bedrooms are dark and altogether inadequately ventilated.

The evil of dark and unventilated halls is also a serious one. From the accompanying Table 7 it will be seen that the halls of 131

TABLE 7.—HOUSES FOUR STORIES OR OVER IN HEIGHT CLASSIFIED BY SOURCE OF LIGHT IN HALLS.

DISTRICTS.	Skylights Only.	Skylights or Bulkhead Windows, and Glass in Doors or Windows to Apts.	Skylights and Transoms to Apartments.	Total Houses with Halls Without Outside Windows.	Total Houses Four Stories and Over.
I.....	35	13	31	79	114
II.....	24	11	8	43	61
III.....	7	0	2	9	17
All districts.....	66	24	41	131	192

out of 192 houses, four stories or more in height, had no windows opening to the outer air. In sixty-six of these houses skylights, often absurdly inadequate in size, furnish the only light in halls; and both in these and in the forty-one houses where there were transoms over doors from apartments to halls, the second and third floor halls were very dark. In many cases only the sound of footsteps on the stairs warns one that it is necessary to step aside and let some one pass, as it is impossible to see a person three feet away. Where, as in the case of twenty-four houses, there are glass panels in apartment doors or windows opening on rooms, conditions are slightly better, except, indeed, where the rooms are themselves dark inner rooms. Still, though one can generally see in such halls well enough to avoid running into passers-by or falling down stairs, it is generally impossible to read unless one holds one's paper in the slender shaft of light which sifts down the stairwell from the skylight. A provision, however, modelled on that in the New York law which requires the substitution of glass for wooden panels in apartment doors where halls are dark, would greatly improve conditions. A large proportion of halls in three-story tenements are also dark.

*Fire-Escapes*

The importance of the subject of protection of dwellings against fire in any city is directly proportioned to the degree of advancement which has been reached in the development of tenement house construction. In New York, where the individual small house, as a residence for the workingman, is practically unknown, except on the outskirts beyond the fire limits, the pressing need of proper protection of tenants against fire has long been felt by the student of conditions; and the fact that nearly one-third of the tenement house law of 1901 is taken up with provisions minutely regulating the construction, maintenance, etc., of the fire-escapes which are required on all tenements, and prescribing fire-proof construction for certain classes of houses, sufficiently indicates the importance which practical men feel attaches to the subject. By way of contrast it is interesting to note the state of affairs in Chicago, where tenement house construction is now going on at a rapid rate, though the evils of the older small wooden house are still the predominating ones. In the recent extensive investigation of the City Homes Company there, but eight tenement houses were reported as having fire-escapes.

In Jersey City, as has already been noted, the tenement house problem is only less advanced than in New York; yet in contrast to the magnificent system of laws in force across the river, Jersey City has only one feeble and ineffective ordinance, which in addition to its other faults of omission and commission, applies only to tenement houses hereafter erected.

When we come to examine the state of affairs which is thus permitted to exist, we find that only eighteen out of the 466 tenement houses, practically all three stories or over in height, are provided with fire-escapes of any sort. This fact speaks for itself. The great mass of the laboring population throughout these districts, which in this respect are certainly representative of the city as a whole, are forced to live under conditions that leave them absolutely at the mercy of any fire that may break out. Even where fire-escapes are provided, not more than half the families on the upper floors as a general rule have access to them. Only five cases were found where all had such means of egress, while in one case but one family out of every four was so provided. Further, it should be realized that five of these eighteen fire-escapes are utterly useless because of the

wooden floorings of the balconies; and that a very large proportion of the balconies are seriously encumbered, and openings frequently covered over—in the case of two houses, by trap doors provided by owners—so that they may furnish more satisfactory storage places.

The attitude of the tenant under these conditions varies from mild resentment against no one in particular to half-humorous resignation. No other danger to which he is subjected seems to make so little impression on the mind of the tenement house dweller. The mother of a large family living on the top floor of a five-story building would sometimes glance apprehensively at her half dozen helpless little ones when asked, "What would you do in case of fire?" But it was seldom that she seemed to realize that any one was responsible for the state of affairs, or that a remedy was possible. There were times when it seemed to the investigator that nothing short of a wide-spread fire in the tenement districts would waken the city to any realization of the true situation.

Fire-proof construction, it need hardly be said, is entirely lacking in the tenement houses investigated. Dumb waiter shafts in the high buildings are almost without exception lined with wood, although it is well known that they furnish one of the commonest paths for the spread of fire. Scuttles or bulkheads with doors opening upon the roof were found almost without exception in houses over three stories high; but such openings were occasionally locked, and in a number of cases ladders were found to be lacking or so seriously encumbered as to be useless. One case may be noted in passing; that of a five-story house occupied by four families on each floor, and without a fire-escape, whose owner kept in his own pocket the key to the closet from which the scuttle opened. Although this owner lived on the second floor of the house, the tenants on the top floor had apparently never thought of protesting against a custom which took from them practically their last chance of escape in case of fire. It is evident that a campaign of education among tenement dwellers is needed, as well as a strict enforcement of adequate laws. Could a sufficient inspecting force be put to work, these two means for attaining a common end might be pursued side by side.

## CHAPTER III

### SANITARY EVILS

One of the most wide-spread and serious evils to which the inhabitants of lower Jersey City are subjected is due primarily to the character of the land, and secondarily to the absence of any adequate regulation of resulting conditions. A large proportion of the city is built upon made-land—filled-in marsh land and land reclaimed from the sea.<sup>6a</sup> In the special districts investigated only six of the seventeen blocks are composed entirely of original solid ground. Five blocks of District I were in greater or less degree formed by the filling in of meadow land or the extension of the water front; three blocks and part of the fourth in District II, and practically all of two blocks of District III were so formed.

The significance of these facts appears when we realize that such land consists largely of dumpings of refuse containing decaying organic matter, swarming with disease-producing bacteria; and is generally damp and subject to periodic risings of tidewater. Dr. George M. Price, a medical sanitary inspector of long experience, whose "Handbook on Sanitation" is accepted as a standard work on the subject by government authorities in New York, says: "A damp soil, viz, a soil wherein the ground moisture is very great and persistent, has been found inimical to the health of the inhabitants, favoring the development of various diseases by the direct effect of the dampness itself and by the greater proneness of damp ground to become contaminated with various pathogenic bacteria and organisms which may be drawn into the dwellings by the movements of the ground air. . . . Malaria and other paroxysmal fevers, tuberculosis, rheumatism, neuralgias, etc., were traced directly to a high water level and marshy ground." And Mr. Charles F. Wingate, a sanitary engineer and specialist in the construction of houses, is even more emphatic, when in an article in the *Municipal Affairs*, he says that the heavy mortality from consumption and kindred diseases "will certainly continue until the sub-soil is drained and made dry, or the law now on the statute books which requires all tenement houses to have an impervious flooring is strictly enforced. I consider the influence of soil dampness far more potent and insidious

<sup>6a</sup> See accompanying map of Jersey City.

than the influence of bad plumbing, and therefore regard these reforms as of vital importance."

It is evident that the dangers to health resulting from such conditions as are seen to prevail in large sections of Jersey City can only be guarded against by rendering basement or cellar floors water and damp proof by solid concrete flooring. Yet only a very small proportion of all the houses investigated were found to have such cellar floors. Exactly what percentage of the remaining unprotected cellars is subject to flooding from backed up tide water it is impossible to say. In many cellars it is certain, from the observations of the investigator or the reliable evidence of tenants that such conditions existed; while a serious degree of dampness prevails in practically all cellars of houses built upon made land. In many cases sewage is washed back into cellars and yards, first floor apartments are rendered damp and unwholesome, and nauseating odors suggest the serious danger to health which such a condition brings upon the entire house.

It is fortunate that the cellar dwelling evil is not a very prevalent one in Jersey City; yet one instance is recalled where a family paying for four rooms in the basement and first floor had been obliged to vacate the lower two rooms entirely, the men of the family wading through water knee-deep to rescue the kitchen stove; while in another case a high water mark a foot or so above the kitchen floor was pointed out. In this case the two dark interior bedrooms behind the kitchen, the sole sleeping rooms of the family, were of course similarly flooded. It is significant that this three room apartment rented for three dollars—the lowest rent anywhere recorded; while six dollars was charged for apartments of the same size and general plan on the floors above. Were the ordinance enforced which requires that no cellar or basement rooms be occupied for living purposes unless they are at least eight feet in height and unless their ceilings are at least four feet above the level of the ground, most of these underground apartments could be ordered vacated; since scarcely one was found which conformed to both requirements. It is far more important, however, that water-proof flooring be insisted upon.

Of sanitary evils for which builders and owners were originally entirely responsible, and which are more easily controlled by them than are those just reviewed, the most conspicuous and widespread

is the foul and ill-smelling privy vault. Practically 75 per cent of all the houses investigated, as may be seen from Table 8, furnish no accommodations save these objectionable structures in the yards. In many cases, especially where there are rear tenements, the yard is almost half occupied by the rows of wooden compartments erected

TABLE 8.—HOUSES PROVIDED WITH WATER-CLOSETS, WITH PRIVIES AND WITH SCHOOL-SINKS

DISTRICTS.	Number of Houses having Water-closets.	Number of Houses having Privies.	Number of Houses having both Water-closets and Privies.	Number of Houses having School-sinks.	Total Number of Houses.
I. ....	98	159	7	2	266
II. ....	25	141	0	0	166
III. ....	4	103	0	0	107
All districts . . . . .	127	403	7	2	539

over a common vault; and the air, upon which the occupants of the rear houses and of the rear apartments of the front houses are wholly dependent for ventilation, is rendered many times almost intolerable by the foul odors that rise from them. The brick vaults are usually sewer-connected; one block and part of another in District III being the only sections in which there is no street sewer, though unsewered vaults are found in small numbers elsewhere. But more nearly as a rule than as an exception a large proportion of the solid matter remains behind in the vault after the liquids have run off to the sewer; and the menace to health and comfort which results from the decomposition of the mass can only be appreciated by one who will visit such a yard in mid-summer, and who will exert his imagination to picture what life must be like in a living room whose windows open within twenty feet of such a structure.

In two of the remaining houses school-sinks—modified privies, with metal vaults in which water stands—were discovered in cellars; elsewhere water-closets, generally located in the house, though occasionally in the yards, were found. One group of houses was provided with latrine closets in the yard—eight separate compartments having a common trough of water, automatically emptied at intervals. Elsewhere individual water-closets were found. Three hundred and ninety-seven such closets were examined in the course

of the investigation. From the classification which follows (Table 9), it will be seen that sixty-one of these closets are the objectionable

TABLE 9.—TYPES OF WATER-CLOSETS

DISTRICT.	Pans.	Long or Yard Hoppers.	Short Hoppers or Wash- downs.	Wash- outs.	Unknown and Not Noted.	Total Number Water- closets.
I .....	52	52	151	40	18	313
II .....	0	15	38	0	6	59
III .....	9	5	11	0	0	25
All districts .....	61	72	200	40	24	397

old pan-closets, outlawed in Jersey City as in New York, Chicago and other cities, and almost invariably in a very insanitary condition. Seventy-two are long-hopper or yard-hopper closets—a form especially suited for use in yards, since they may be arranged so as to be safe from the action of frost, but likely to corrode and otherwise be objectionable for use in the house. Of the remaining closets two hundred are wash-down or short-hopper closets, and forty are wash-outs—all alike distinguished by having basins arranged so that water stands in them, and all fairly good forms; though not a few of the short-hoppers were old and made of metal are corroded and in a highly objectionable condition. These closets are occasionally located within apartments; but generally open from halls and are shared by two or more families each. In a few houses they were found in the cellar—a cellar in each case so dark that one could hardly find his way about without the aid of artificial light. Thirty-one closets were found in yards. Of the water-closet compartments located within the houses, ninety-two were noted as having no windows to the outer air,—being either wholly unventilated or with small windows on halls or rooms. The closets on the top floors of five-story tenements are frequently supplied with insufficient water pressure to adequately cleanse the bowl; and owing to this and to other special causes, thirty-nine closets were found to be inadequately flushed. As to the trapping of closets no satisfactory statistics could be gathered, as in the greater number of cases the space under the seats was enclosed. Proper venting of water-closet traps, so far as could be discovered, is to be found only in the newest and best constructed of tenements.



These various faults of construction are so evidently evils that no extended arguments are needed to prove them such. Closets in cellars and in yards are no less inaccessible and inconvenient than are privies. Unlighted and unventilated compartments are obnoxious to every sense, and except where standards of housekeeping are very high, their dark corners are almost sure to contain accumulations of dirt and filth. Where a pretence of ventilation has been introduced in the form of small windows on rooms, the dangers to health are only increased. On all the points noted above great improvements could be wrought by proper regulation and systematic inspection. The New York tenement house law here, as on many other points, offers most valuable suggestions.

The inaccessibility of privies has already been noted as an evil. That families living on the fourth and fifth floors should be compelled to use such accommodations is evidently, especially in the dead of winter, a very serious hardship. When, as is generally the case, two or more families have to share the use of a compartment, the evils of lack of privacy are added. Table 10 gives the ratio

TABLE 10.—NUMBER OF PRIVIES IN EACH BLOCK, AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF APARTMENTS USING EACH

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	Number of Privies.	Average Number of Apartments Using Each Privy.	DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	Number of Privies.	Average Number of Apartments Using Each Privy.
I.—1 .....	45	1.95	II.—1 .....	117	2.06
2 .....	56	2.32	2 .....	92	2.03
3 .....	68	1.88	3 .....	56	1.50
4 .....	73	2.06	4 .....	86	1.84
5 .....	49	1.58	III.—1 .....	25	2.68
6 .....	61	2.25	2 .....	85	1.82
7 .....	58	1.32	3 .....	85	2.01
8 .....	36	2.09			
9 .....	17	2.11			
10 .....	20	2.55			

between number of apartments using privies and number of privies in each of the blocks investigated. Even where the ratio for the whole block is considerably less than two to one, there are always many houses in which two or more families use each privy; while where that ratio is approached or passed, the presence of a large number of houses in which more than two families use each privy is indicated. Such a state of affairs means not only a

lack of privacy, but it means that no one tenant is able to control the condition of the compartment which she or her family uses, since a careless or slovenly neighbor may not only refuse to do her share of the cleaning, but by leaving the door of the compartment unlocked so that children and loungers may go in and out at will, may in a short time destroy the effect of the other's most laborious efforts at cleanliness. Where, as in a considerable number of cases noted, three, four or more families use each water-closet or privy, these evils are found in still more exaggerated form. Compartments under these circumstances, as well as elsewhere with less excuse, generally stand open, and in very many cases are in an indescribably filthy condition.

Only less serious than those just detailed are the evils which result from the location and condition of household sinks, where in general all water for cooking and for bathing must be obtained. The collection of statistics as to the plumbing of sinks was not at first attempted, but was taken up as a result of an observation of conditions in the earlier blocks investigated. Eleven hundred and sixty-two sinks, located in four blocks of District I, in three blocks of District II and in District III, were examined. Of these, as may be seen from Table II, only 10.2 per cent were properly trapped and

TABLE II.—PLUMBING OF SINKS

DISTRICT.	Number of Sinks Trapped and Vented.	Number of Sinks Trapped but Not Vented.	Number of Sinks Neither Trapped Nor Vented.	Number of Sinks Enclosed.	Total Number of Sinks.
I. ....	51	323	21	22	417
II. ....	38	209	58	63	458
III. ....	31	165	33	58	287
All districts .....	120	787	112	143	1,162

vented; that is, in thoroughly sanitary condition; 67.7 per cent were trapped but not vented, a far from satisfactory state of affairs, especially where, as in many cases, traps are so small or otherwise so defective as to be practically useless. Nine and six-tenths per cent were neither trapped nor vented, the pipes thus offering free passage for the contaminated sewer air. Twelve and three-tenths per cent were boarded up solidly below, so that the waste-pipes could not be examined,—an almost sure sign that the concealed plumbing is of the oldest and worst type.

The inconvenience and lack of privacy which in many cases results from insufficient water-supply and from the location of sinks is hardly less serious a menace to family life than their faulty construction proves to health. Even in some of the newest and most respectable appearing of the tall brick tenement houses, the tenants in numbers of apartments suffer from a serious lack of water. Sinks are indeed provided in kitchens; but although above the fourth floor the pressure is seldom sufficient to furnish an adequate supply of water, in many such buildings no pumps are provided; while of the large water-supply tanks on roofs which are so generally used in New York tenement houses, not a single one was found in the districts investigated. The owner of one house, all the tenants on the top floor of which had informed the investigator that they had to carry up their water in pails from the apartments of their neighbors on the next floor, interfered to prevent further investigation; and when it was asked what objection there was the somewhat naive response was given, "We don't like some of the questions you ask; for instance, about the water on the top floors. We pay our water-tax, and we don't get the water." Doubtless, the first of these statements was no less true than the second; since the landlord in question owns no less than nine large tenements in the districts investigated, and is therefore presumably not poor. That the difficulty might be remedied by the simple and not very expensive expedient of providing tanks or pumps was, however, a fact perfectly well known to this as to all but the most ignorant of tenement house owners. This is one of the evils which may most easily be corrected by governmental interference.

Other evils of a somewhat similar but more serious character are, however, far more widespread. As may be seen from Table 12,

TABLE 12.—HOUSES CLASSIFIED BY LOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD SINKS

DISTRICT.	Having Sinks in Apartments.	Having All Sinks in Halls.	Having Part of Sinks in Apts. Part in Halls.	Having Only Water Supply in Yard.	Having Sinks in Upper Halls and Water in Yard.	Total Number of Houses.
I .....	207	19	36	0	4	266
II .....	124	30	12	0	0	166
III .....	66	23	10	8	0	107
All districts .....	397	72	58	8	4	539

eight houses were found in the course of the investigation in which, in flat contradiction to a city ordinance, no water at all was furnished indoors; and in four other houses the tenants on the first floors were similarly dependent on water in the yards. On the upper floors of these four houses, and throughout seventy-two entire houses, as well as on some of the floors of fifty-eight other houses, sinks are located in the public halls, no apartment having a private sink of its own. As may be seen by reference to Table 13, this means that 447 of

TABLE 13.—FAMILIES SHARING USE OF SINKS OR HYDRANTS

DISTRICT.	With One Other Family.	With More than One Other Family.	Using Water in Yard.	Total Families Sharing Use of Sinks, Etc.
I .....	179	19	6	204
II .....	103	8	0	111
III .....	91	13	28	132
All districts.....	373	40	34	447

the families interviewed in the investigation were obliged to use the sink or hydrant from which they obtained their water in common with one or more other families, while forty of these families shared such use with three or more families and thirty-four were dependent on water in the yard. The numbers would be still larger, of course, were the total number of apartments, occupied and unoccupied, taken, instead of the number of families actually interviewed. Thus in one case a row of four houses is provided with but two hydrants in the common yard, upon which twenty-two apartments are dependent; but tenants, even in this lowest and most thickly populated corner of the Italian quarter, have shown their good sense by leaving vacant eight of these apartments.

The full meaning of these facts can only be realized by one who will make the effort to picture in imagination how family life must be affected by such conditions. It is no sufficient answer to say that standards differ; for the difference in standards is largely, though to what extent we have no means of calculating, the result of environment. Statistics as to the cleanliness of apartments, which are presented in a later chapter, show that even among the poorest Poles and Italians a surprisingly large proportion of apartments are kept clean; and the actual daily experiences of the investigator have

set in a striking light facts which no figures can sufficiently emphasize,—among them, the laborious and patient efforts by which the poorest and most overburdened mother of a large family will often succeed in keeping her little three-room apartment as immaculate as the finest of residences. It is very probable that if reasonable bathing facilities were provided, either in the houses or at conveniently located public baths,<sup>7</sup> the standard of personal cleanliness would be greatly raised and would tend to raise the standard of household cleanliness with it. The general secretary of the State Charities Aid Association of New Jersey, in writing of the public institutions of the state, has remarked that "It is astonishing to observe the responsiveness of the dependent, defective and delinquent classes to . . . high standards of comfort and cleanliness. . . . If the sheriff believes that prisoners do not need clean corridors, clean beds or hammocks or clean persons, the prisoner seems to revel in his freedom from cleanliness." But in a jail where "Prisoners feel that they have a high standard to maintain . . . hammocks are as clean as sheets would be in a well ordered house."<sup>8</sup> If so much can be said of the classes which make up the inmates of a jail, is it not worse than futile to attempt to explain the uncleanness of apartments or persons where such conditions as have been described prevail by talk of "natural depravity" or the like? As long ago as 1842 the Inspector of the Board of Health in New York expressed the conviction that "the causes of uncleanness, poverty and sickness were not so much to be found in the 'innate depravity' of the people as in the environment in which they were compelled to live";<sup>9</sup> and committees and commissions since appointed to investigate housing conditions have reinforced and emphasized that statement.

The sanitary evils thus far discussed have been wholly or largely evils of faulty construction, the correction of which would involve definite changes in the building or its plumbing fixtures. There remains a large class of evils most injurious to health and destructive to comfort which are due solely to neglect and bad housekeeping. It is, of course, in houses occupied by the lowest class of tenants that these evils are most commonly found; yet it is the landlord who

<sup>7</sup> It is anticipated that public baths will be established in Jersey City during the coming winter, in accordance with a bill passed last spring by the State Legislature.

<sup>8</sup> Annual Report of the State Charities Aid Association of New Jersey for 1901. William H. Allen, general secretary.

<sup>9</sup> "History of Tenement House Reform in New York," by Lawrence Veiller.

is to be held responsible for them, since no individual tenant can control the condition of those parts of the house or premises outside his own apartment. Two or three vicious or filthy tenants may render a house intolerable for an even larger number of respectable families, who have no means of correcting the evils except an appeal to the landlord or the Board of Health. Unfortunately, such appeals too often prove fruitless, and families with decent standards, unable to find other convenient quarters within their means, or too depressed and discouraged to make the effort, remain among influences which constantly tend to drag them down.

Reference has already been made to the filthy condition of privies on many premises. Hardly less serious is the condition in numerous yards, cellars and public halls. Tin cans, ashes, papers, rags, garbish and rubbish of every conceivable kind are frequently found heaped in cellars, strewn over yards, piled knee-deep in the narrow spaces between rear houses, or littering the bottoms of shafts. In many cases no excuse could be offered by tenants, as proper receptacles for garbage and refuse were provided by landlords. Vivid descriptions of the methods of garbage disposal employed by some rear tenement dwellers are given by respectable neighbors in houses fronting on adjoining streets. Said one woman, herself a neat housekeeper, "At night when everything's quiet you hear a swashing noise all of a sudden, and there they are emptying pails of slops out of the back windows! They throw the stuff as far out as they can, and most of it lands on our side of the fence. The smell in hot weather is something frightful." In one cellar, privies were found, and in and about them liquid garbage and filth of every sort had been thrown till, even with the aid of a candle, it was hardly possible to pick one's way across the sodden earth floor. In another a company of green-eyed scrawny cats prowling in the dark among heaps of refuse made a gruesome picture. In one yard a sheep, poking in the garbage barrel, had scattered its contents far and wide. In many cases in the Italians' quarters, cellars and yards were used for the storage or handling of rags—a practice both directly injurious to health and conducive to the spread of fire. Garbage barrels, broken, leaking liquids or overflowing, and sometimes so long unemptied as to be buried quite out of sight under noisome heaps of refuse, were found now in yards, again in cellars, not infrequently in hallways.

This question of garbage disposal is one where responsibility can more readily be fixed on landlords than in some others. As a general rule wooden barrels, almost always without covers of any kind, are provided, and some arrangement is made either with the regular janitor, or where there is no janitor, with one of the tenants, to place them on the sidewalk for emptying twice a week. In many houses where there is no responsible person in charge this function is very irregularly performed, garbage being permitted to accumulate till barrels overflow, and the scattered remains being left on the ground from week to week. In only forty-nine cases were metal receptacles provided. Very many landlords furnish no barrels at all, tenants carrying their own boxes or pails down to the sidewalk or using such other means of disposal as seems good to them. In twenty-eight houses it was noted that no receptacles of any sort were provided or in use, and tenants acknowledged that garbage and ashes were habitually thrown in cellars, yards or adjoining lots. In one case the occupants of three houses, one front and two in the rear, regularly emptied what would have gone into barrels had such been provided in a heap in the common yard—said heap being in full sight of a much traveled street; and according to the testimony of tenants the mass was carted away “once a month or so.” One tenant referred to the cellar below as “a terrible place”; and the words are only too mild when applied to this and other neglected spots.

The foregoing paragraphs give but a faint idea of the conditions which prevail throughout large sections of Jersey City. To sum up with a few figures which suggest the extent of these evils in the districts investigated, we may note that in the public hallways of seventy-six houses, in the cellars of forty-five, and in the yards of one hundred, conditions were found of such seriousness as in the opinion of the investigator to warrant and demand interference by the Board of Health. These are only the very worst cases; in a much larger number of others similar evils will soon become equally entrenched unless prompt attention is given by landlords to their correction. It is evident that paved floors and spaces are far more readily kept clean than are earthen ones. Yet but thirty-six cellars in the houses investigated were found to have properly concreted floors, while only about the same number were floored with brick, cobble-stones or wood; and but sixty-nine yards were found to be

entirely paved with stone or brick. Were ordinances made and enforced requiring concrete flooring for cellars and proper pavement in yards, and were adequate provision for the collection of garbage in each house insisted upon, great improvements would be wrought. The residence on the premises of a responsible janitor or caretaker might also be required, as in done in New York. For the correction of existing evils of this class, however, what is most needed is systematic inspection by an adequate inspecting force. In the absence of such a force and as a step toward securing it, private associations for sanitary improvement may do most effective work. A fuller discussion of such associations will be found in the concluding chapter.



## CHAPTER IV

### OVERCROWDED APARTMENTS

One of the most serious evils from which the poorer classes suffer in Jersey City, as in most large cities, is that of overcrowded living quarters. There would seem to be here more justification than in the cases discussed in the last chapter, for those who would hold the sufferer himself responsible for the evils from which he suffers; especially where, as is very generally the case among the Poles and Italians, the condition of overcrowding is due to the custom of taking boarders. But even here questions of rent, employment and unfamiliarity with the customs of a strange land should be taken into account. In many cases brothers or sisters just from the old country are taken in (by a family themselves hardly able to stumble through a dozen sentences in English) until they "can get a start"; and of course meanwhile can contribute little or nothing to the family expenses. Again, where, as is too often the case, the boarders are unrelated to the family, it frequently appears that irregularity of employment for the head of the family has forced a choice between taking in strangers and eviction,—as when, during the past winter, scores of Poles in Jersey City were reduced to half time and half pay by slackness of work in the American sugar refinery. Three "boarders,"—strictly speaking lodgers, in most cases,—paying two dollars per month each, will cover the average monthly rental of a three room apartment.

We are not here concerned to any great extent, however, with the question of responsibility, but with facts; upon an understanding of which it is hoped that remedial efforts will follow. The overcrowded family of course suffers most acutely and directly; but the entire community is likewise endangered; since in such overcrowded apartments contagious diseases spread with alarming rapidity, while other disorders of a social nature are engendered which more subtly undermine the moral and physical health of the community.

Witness has been borne to the evils of overcrowding by many authorities in this country and abroad. The secretary of the New York Tenement House Committee of 1894 notes among these evils

the following: "Keeping children out of doors until midnight in warm weather, because rooms are almost unendurable; making cleanliness of house and street difficult; filling the air with unwholesome emanations and foul odors of every kind; producing a state of nervous tension; interfering with the separateness of home life; leading to a promiscuous mixing of all ages and sexes in a single room, thus breaking down the barriers of modesty and conducing to the corruption of the young and occasionally to revolting crimes."

A paragraph from the report on "Tenement Conditions in Chicago," referred to above, will further emphasize these evils and suggest still others. "The Royal Commission of 1884, in London, gathered a wealth of testimony on the evils of overcrowding. In England the school board visitors, clergymen, charity agents, and others know far more intimately than similar workers in this country, the lives of the poor in their homes. From their testimony it was gathered that immorality, perverted sexuality, drunkenness, pauperism and many forms of debauchery were caused in some instances, in others abetted, by the indecent overcrowding that existed. The testimony further showed most distressing physical results due to overcrowding. High death rates; a pitiful increase in infant mortality; terrible suffering among little children; scrofula and congenital diseases; ophthalmia, due to dark, ill-ventilated, overcrowded rooms; sheer exhaustion and inability to work; encouragement of infectious diseases, reducing physical stamina, and thus producing consumption and diseases arising from general debility, were some of the evils of overcrowding."

Overcrowding in apartments was made the subject of especially careful study in the investigation in Jersey City. Two methods of measurement of such overcrowding are possible: by number of occupants per room and by cubic air space per occupant. Both methods have been applied to the 2,286 apartments investigated. To secure perfectly accurate results, it is of course necessary to discover just how many rooms in a given apartment are used for sleeping purposes and how many persons sleep in each. This may seem a simple matter, but in practice reliable results are not only very difficult, but in many cases impossible to secure, save by a night inspection. Not only must allowance be made for very general understatement of the number of boarders taken, but in a large proportion of cases either no answers at all or wholly unreliable answers could be

obtained to questions as to the distribution of boarders and members of the family at night. Under these circumstances it has seemed best, instead of attempting to state the number of individuals sleeping in each room and the precise cubic air space afforded by that room to each, to give the ratio of occupants to entire number of rooms in each apartment, and the cubic air space per individual afforded by that apartment as a whole. While only rough indications of the degree of overcrowding at night are given by this method, it has at least the advantage of greater accuracy, so far as it goes, than could fairly be claimed for one seemingly more precise.

Applying the method of measurement by cubic air space to the 2,286 apartments investigated, we find, as will be seen from Table 14, that 46.1 per cent of them provide 800 cubic feet of air or more

TABLE 14.—CLASSIFICATION OF APARTMENTS BY ALLOWANCE OF CUBIC AIR SPACE PER OCCUPANT.

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	Less than 400 Cubic Feet.	400 to 500 Cubic Feet.	500 to 600 Cubic Feet.	600 to 700 Cubic Feet.	700 to 800 Cubic Feet.	800 Cubic Feet and Over.	Total Number of Apts.
I.— 1.....	10	22	20	9	5	20	86
2.....	12	15	17	18	14	35	111
3.....	8	15	18	10	16	93	160
4.....	20	22	19	24	7	39	131
5.....	7	15	17	13	12	109	73
6.....	6	16	8	16	14	90	150
7.....	2	10	16	14	11	110	163
8.....	5	14	18	8	7	67	119
9.....	4	5	12	8	9	55	93
10.....	5	8	8	10	5	51	87
II.— 1.....	28	45	21	29	15	37	225
2.....	20	25	31	21	19	68	184
3.....	6	10	14	18	5	41	94
4.....	10	14	12	13	14	65	128
III.— 1.....	13	12	8	6	2	12	53
2.....	31	25	19	19	12	50	156
3.....	21	29	16	17	12	69	164
All districts.	208	302	274	253	179	1,061	2,177 <sup>10</sup>

per occupant. This means,—except under peculiar and unusual conditions, where families deliberately crowd together at night to have more rooms free for other purposes,—fair, and in most cases thoroughly comfortable and healthful conditions. Eighteen and eight-tenths per cent of apartments furnish from 600 to 800 cubic feet,—which, if proper attention be paid to ventilation, means in the majority of cases a tolerable state of affairs. The remaining 34.2

<sup>10</sup> In the case of nine apartments measurements could not be taken.

per cent of apartments furnish less than 600 cubic feet of air per occupant, while 22.3 per cent furnish less than 500 cubic feet.

In all of these latter, and in most of the 34.2 per cent, very serious overcrowding exists. This becomes evident when we realize what allowance of air in bedrooms alone goes with a given number of cubic feet of air per occupant in the apartment as a whole. Each bedroom generally contains less than one-half as much cubic space as does the kitchen or living room; so that in the average three room apartment the allowance of air in the apartment as a whole must be halved to give the allowance in bedrooms only, while in two and four room apartments greater or less reductions on the same plan must be made. Where the overcrowding is very serious, it is almost invariably the custom to occupy the kitchen as well as the bedrooms for living purposes. Such a custom, it need hardly be pointed out, involves evils and inconveniences hardly less serious than the dangers of limited breathing space; though one who is familiar with the tiny box-like interior bedrooms of the typical tenement, equally inaccessible to sunlight and fresh air, can only wonder that a desire to preserve the decencies and amenities of life so generally keeps families from overflowing at night into the one living room.

Government interference to prevent overcrowding, it may here be noted, is generally authorized, when authorized at all, where there is less than 400 cubic feet of air per adult, with a smaller allowance for children. Such a law is enforced in Glasgow by an especially efficient system of night inspection; authority being given in the first place to measure all apartments of less than a stated number of rooms, and to place on the outer door of each a ticket stating the maximum number of persons who may occupy the apartment. The limit is placed at the same point by the New York law. A law passed by the New Jersey legislature last winter gives the local boards of health power to put a stop to overcrowding beyond the limit of 300 cubic feet of air per adult and 150 per child. While this limit is unquestionably too low, considerable good may nevertheless come from the enforcement of the law.

The other test of overcrowding, by ratio of number of persons to number of rooms, while a less accurate means of estimating effect on health, furnishes a more accurate indication of the relation of overcrowding to standards of decency. An example typical of many cases met with will make this distinction clear. Suppose two

large, high-ceiled rooms with a total cubic contents of thirty-five hundred cubic feet, occupied by eight persons. Each person has then more than the minimum of 400 cubic feet; yet the absence of any possibility of privacy or decency of living involved where men and women boarders, parents and growing children make up the eight need not be dwelt upon. It is evident that three or four rooms with an aggregate cubic contents of less than 3,000 cubic feet might be occupied by the same eight persons with perhaps greater danger to health from limited breathing space, but with certainly better opportunities for separation by sexes.

If we apply this second method of measurement to the apartments investigated, we find, as may be seen from Table 15, that in

TABLE 15.—CLASSIFICATION OF APARTMENTS BY AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER ROOM.

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.	Less than 1 Person Per Room.	1-1.49 Persons Per Room.	1.5-1.99 Persons Per Room.	2-2.49 Persons Per Room.	2.5-2.99 Persons Per Room.	3 Persons or More Per Room.	Total Number of Apts.
I.— 1.....	12	21	28	17	4	4	86
2.....	12	26	27	26	10	10	111
3.....	42	71	21	18	6	2	160
4.....	14	49	24	29	9	6	131
5.....	43	55	31	19	12	13	173
6.....	37	56	24	27	5	3	152
7.....	37	79	21	19	4	3	163
8.....	25	43	22	17	4	8	119
9.....	20	34	17	17	3	2	93
10.....	16	31	24	11	3	3	88
II.— 1.....	35	86	45	39	12	8	225
2.....	41	66	45	14	10	8	184
3.....	23	35	16	10	4	6	94
4.....	33	54	23	17	5	1	133
III.— 1.....	6	13	15	13	6	0	53
2.....	26	55	29	32	7	8	157
3.....	36	62	34	19	9	4	164
All districts.	458	836	446	344	113	89	2,286

23.8 per cent of them there are two persons or more to each room. Such apartments may fairly be classed as overcrowded; since either every room is occupied for living purposes, or if one room is reserved for kitchen and living room, the bedrooms are shared by a minimum average of two and two-thirds, three or four persons each, according as the number of rooms in the apartment is four, three or two. To appreciate what this means it is of course necessary to realize that few bedrooms in such apartments contain more than 800 cubic feet, while a large proportion are dark interior rooms containing

from 400 to 600 cubic feet or even less. These facts having been pointed out, it is unnecessary further to emphasize the seriousness of the state of affairs, where, as in 202 apartments, or nearly 9 per cent of all, the ratio of number of occupants to number of rooms rises as high as 2.5 or more.

It is interesting to note the varying proportions which overcrowded apartments bear to all apartments in the different blocks; ranging from 41 per cent of all apartments in one block which is chiefly Polish and Russian, and 35 per cent in one block which is purely Italian, to as low as 16 per cent in a block chiefly occupied by Americans, Germans and Irish. Curiously enough, the two blocks which stand at opposite extremes in this respect,—Blocks 2 and 3 of District I,—directly adjoin each other. In general, as may be seen by a comparison of Tables 14 and 15 with the table of nationalities in Chapter V, overcrowding is commonest in blocks occupied chiefly by the Italians and the eastern European peoples, and least common where the English speaking and German nationalities predominate.

Of all the mass of statistics of overcrowding that have been collected in various cities, very little is available for direct comparison with the data gathered in Jersey City. Thus, in the government report on "The Slums of Great Cities," statistics are given by individual rooms, instead of by apartments. It is interesting, however, to note that the average number of individuals per room in the districts investigated is higher than the average number of occupants per room in the apartments covered by the recent investigation of the City Homes Company in Chicago; the former being 1.3, while the latter is 1.28 persons. While averages do not form the most satisfactory basis of comparison, a difference so marked as this unquestionably indicates a greater degree of overcrowding in the Jersey City than in the Chicago districts.

Some concrete examples of overcrowding may perhaps assist the imagination of the reader to realize the meaning of the figures given. A few follow, the facts having been summarized directly from schedule cards chosen almost at random from the records of some of the more crowded blocks, without any intention of presenting the worst conditions.

1. "In three rooms with a total cubic contents of a trifle over 3,000 cubic feet, lives a Russian family of ten,—father, mother and five children, three of them over five years old, and three boarders,—

one a brother, the other two women, apparently unrelated. Man works in a factory; rooms very dirty."

2. "Three rooms, contents 2,060 cubic feet; family of six, no boarders; Italians; man owns the house."

3. "Two rooms, contents 3,500 cubic feet; family of eight, no boarders; Russians; man works in factory; rooms fairly clean."

4. "Two rooms, contents 2,840 cubic feet; nine persons, six of them boarders; Russians; man a laborer in iron foundry; rooms very dirty."

5. "Two rooms, contents 2,400 cubic feet; five persons, man and wife and baby and two boarders; Hungarians; man working 'on tracks,' railroad; rooms very dirty."

6. "Four rooms, contents 4,127 cubic feet; twelve persons, one a boarder; Poles; man in sugar refinery; rooms fairly clean."

7. "Three rooms, contents 2,872 cubic feet; man and wife and three boarders, two men and one woman; Poles; man a freight handler on Lehigh Valley Railroad docks; rooms fairly clean." (This case is given as an example of actual overcrowding where neither the allowance of air nor the number of persons per room indicates the seriousness of the condition. It is evident that decency compels the use of the kitchen as a sleeping room.)

8. "Three rooms, contents 2,090 cubic feet; six persons, two Italian couples, one with two small children; one man washes bottles, other works on dump cart; rooms dirty."

9. "Three rooms, contents 2,566 cubic feet; eleven persons, parents and nine children; Italians; man works in hat factory; rooms fairly clean."

10. "Four rooms, contents 2,178 cubic feet; man, wife, baby, and six men boarders; man a day laborer; rooms dirty."

A number of these examples illustrate merely average conditions among the nationalities in question; only a few are representative of the worst. It will be noted that only in the last two cases given has the board of health power to intervene under the New Jersey law. Yet in one of these cases the overcrowding is due simply to an unusually large family of children; while interference is far more needed in the first and fourth cases given,—the latter of which, though one of the worst cases found, might be matched by a large number of others. It is very probable, however, that a night visit to any of the apartments where boarders are kept would reveal

conditions enough worse to warrant interference even under the New Jersey law; for the number of boarders is doubtless in many cases understated, and in most cases fluctuates widely.

Still another principle in regard to overcrowding should be noted. Writing of the report of a special committee of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor on housing conditions in New York in 1853, Mr. Lawrence Veiller says: "Nothing contained in the report of this committee is of greater value than the demonstration of the principle that 'the number of persons on a given area of soil cannot be increased beyond a certain limit without endangering health.'" It is to be regretted that the present investigation does not furnish data as to the precise number of human beings living on each acre. Private houses having been left untouched, and owners here and there having seen fit to object to the investigation, the population records of the different blocks are necessarily incomplete. Where, however, such serious overcrowding exists in individual apartments, and where the number of apartments per house rises so high as in Jersey City, it is evident that serious overcrowding, measured by population per acre, must also exist.



## CHAPTER V

### STUDIES OF THE POPULATION

The data in regard to houses and their occupants given in the preceding chapters should, it is believed, furnish a sufficient basis for a movement for reform in legislation. There still remains, however, open to the private citizen, a large field for the betterment of housing conditions and for the elevation of the population housed. The various aspects, educational and other, of such private and corporate undertakings will be more fully discussed in the chapter which follows. For the present the possibility and the need of establishing associations for the building, repairing and managing of tenement houses upon enlightened principles, and the further need of such educational and social work in other parts of the city as is being carried on so effectively by Whittier House in the region about lower Grand street, are noted by way of explanation for the presentation of the material offered in this chapter. Every bit of information on the subject of nationalities,—their distribution, their characteristic habits, occupations, etc., that can be brought to the attention of the social worker can, it is felt, be put to use by him. The facts here grouped together, gathered as they are from the records of over 2,000 families, including more than 10,000 individuals, possess, it is believed, some representative value. Occupations, in each case of the chief bread-winner of the family; average size of apartments, and rent paid per room and per apartment; and condition in respect to cleanliness of each apartment, all have been grouped by nationalities; the facts thus related possessing, it is believed, far greater significance than if presented by blocks or districts without regard to national lines.

The general distribution of nationalities has already been sketched in the introductory chapter. Table 16 gives in detail facts which we can only briefly summarize in the text. The preponderance of foreign-born over native American families is seen to be greatest in the third and smallest district, where less than 10 per cent of American families were found, somewhat less in District II, where 14.7 per cent were Americans, and least in District I,—though

TABLE 16.—NATIONALITIES OF HEADS OF FAMILIES.

District and Block.	American.	Irish.	German.	Polish.	Russian.	Italian.	Jewish.	English.	Scotch.	Lithuanian.	Norwegian.	Swedish.	Danish.	Finnish.	Canadian.	Belgian.	Slavish.	Austro-Hungarian.	Bohemian.	Rumanian.	Dutch.	Swiss.	Welsh.	French.	Colored.	Chinese.	Total.
I.—																											
1.	10	7	16	35	11	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	86
2.	12	6	18	46	11	3	2	2	1	11	7	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	111
3.	41	30	26	20	10	2	5	2	1	11	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	160
4.	19	9	27	50	9	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	132
5.	26	34	41	21	30	1	7	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	173
6.	24	10	57	36	4	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	152
7.	40	36	35	5	5	3	6	1	1	1	5	7	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	163
8.	11	42	16	17	18	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	120
9.	21	25	7	12	3	4	1	1	1	1	3	10	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	93
10.	24	25	12	3	4	4	2	6	1	1	4	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	88
Total	234	230	255	254	101	30	32	22	3	22	13	25	3	19	5	2	4	16	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1,279
II.—																											
1.	18	48	10	82	1	57	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	225
2.	30	24	10	98	1	3	6	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	183
3.	23	18	3	32	5	5	5	1	2	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	95
4.	23	28	12	42	1	9	4	3	1	9	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	134
Total	94	118	35	254	74	20	8	2	17	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	637
III.—																											
1.	0	0	0	0	53	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	53
2.	16	14	11	3	112	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	160
3.	20	26	16	4	81	10	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	164
Total	36	40	27	7	246	10	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	377
All districts	364	388	317	515	101	350	62	35	8	39	16	28	3	21	5	2	4	18	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10,203

10 A few apartments were occupied by two families; hence the slightly greater number of families interviewed than of apartments investigated.

even here but 18.3 per cent were native born. The Poles, who form the largest single contingent in the population,—22.4 per cent of all—are massed chiefly along Morris and Essex streets in District I, and along Morgan, Steuben and Henderson streets in District II, of whose population they make up 39.8 per cent. The Russians, who so closely resemble the Poles in appearance and general manner of life as to be hardly distinguishable from them, but who sharply distinguish themselves, as Greek Catholics, from their Roman Catholic Polish neighbors, are found intermingled with the former in District I. The Germans, Irish and Americans, with their respective 13.8 per cent, 16.9 per cent and 15.8 per cent of the total population, are generally found intermingled with each other and are far more evenly distributed; and no one of them, even where most numerous, gives to any street the marked character that belongs to the streets occupied chiefly by Poles or Italians. This last named people, 15.2 per cent of all, are found chiefly in District III, where Italian families make up 65.2 per cent of the total number, and along Railroad avenue in District II; and are even more solidly massed and less intermingled with other nationalities than are the Poles; while their more genial and social nature, leading to a constant overflow of life upon the sidewalks, gives to the streets which they dominate, especially to First, Monmouth, Brunswick and Colgate streets in District III, an intensely foreign and exceedingly picturesque aspect.

These six nationalities make up together the mass of the population. It should be noted that the preponderance of Poles and Italians in the population as a whole is considerably greater than when reckoned by heads of families, as here; for the reason that a large proportion of families among these two nationalities and the Russian are swelled by the addition of numerous boarders of the same race—a state of affairs comparatively rare among the English-speaking and Germanic peoples. From the large number of other nationalities but one, the Jewish, has been chosen for special mention in the tables which follow; for while numbering only sixty-two families, they are, by reason of their distinctive character, an important element in the population. The various Scandinavian peoples and the English are also well represented; and their presence among the “other nationalities” accounts for certain marked characteristics of this miscellaneous group in the tables which follow,—as the high average rent paid, and the large preponderance of clean apartments among them.

Taking up now the occupations which predominate among the different nationalities, we note first from Table 17, as was to be expected, that the percentage of skilled workmen is highest and the percentage of unskilled workmen lowest among the Americans, the former being 26.9 per cent and the latter 46.7 per cent. At the other extreme we find the Poles, with their 81.3 per cent of unskilled laborers and their 6 per cent of skilled workers, and the Russians, with more than 90 per cent of unskilled. Between these two extremes come the other nationalities. The Jews, with but seven unskilled laborers, have almost as large a percentage of skilled workers as have the Americans,—25.8 per cent; and lead all nationalities in the percentage employed in mercantile pursuits,—54.5 per cent. The Germans have the next largest percentage of skilled workers,—15.2 per cent; and the Italians come close behind them with 14.2 per cent, while the Irish have 12.1. On the other hand, the Italians have 68.2 per cent, the Irish 67 per cent, and the Germans 57.4 per cent of unskilled laborers. This statement, however, unmodified by a consideration of the character of the unskilled labor in each case, is misleading. Among Germans and Irish, as well as among Americans, the variety of occupations represented under this head is large; and many positions so classified demand some degree of skill and a high degree of steady application, intelligence and trustworthiness. The Italian unskilled laborers, on the other hand, are seen to be largely day laborers in the streets, and in general are of the lowest order industrially. It is interesting to note also that longshoremen and railway hands claim a larger percentage among the Irish than among either Germans or Americans, while Germans would seem to flock into the factories more than either Americans or Irish. A striking contrast, too, is presented by the Poles and Italians. The great mass of Polish and Russian immigrants in Jersey City, it would seem, are employed in factories and about the railroads and docks, as is suggested by their manner of settling near the water-front and the great railway centres. In contrast to this industrial monotony we find among the Italians a great variety of occupations, day laborers predominating among the unskilled, with bootblacks, rag-pickers, junk men and factory and railroad hands in considerable numbers; and a very large number of skilled and special workers and storekeepers, etc., being present.

TABLE 17.—OCCUPATIONS OF HEADS OF FAMILIES OF LEADING NATIONALITIES

OCCUPATION.	NATIONALITIES.							Total Leading Nation- alities.
	Ameri- can.	Irish.	Ger- man.	Pol- ish.	Rus- sian.	Ital- ian.	Jew- ish.	
<i>Unskilled.</i>								
Factories, workshops, etc. ....	31	55	135	219	62	36	3	541
Railroads and docks .....	48	98	16	145	18	37	2	364
Day laborers with pick and shovel .....						74		74
Drivers .....	26	16	7	9		5		63
Deck hands and sailors .....	17	4	3	1	1			26
Boot-blacks .....						19		19
Ragpickers, junkmen, etc. ....		1				35		36
Miscellaneous unskilled .....	48	86	21	45	11	33	2	246
<i>Skilled.</i>								
Machinists .....	8	1	4	4				17
Engineers .....	14	5	5					24
Mechanics .....			1	1				2
Workers in metals .....	17	9	10	8		3		47
Boilermakers .....	11	5	1					17
Patternmakers .....	2							2
Tool makers .....	2							2
Pipe cutters and coverers .....	1	1						2
Steamfitters .....	1	1	1					3
Steam carver .....			1					1
Nickel plater .....						1		1
Spike maker .....	1							1
Galvanizers .....	1			2				3
Driller .....				1				1
Truss maker .....		1		1				1
Coopers .....	8	3	7			3		21
Carpenters and cabinetmakers ..	7	10	10	10	1	3	2	43
Painters and caulkers .....	9		3			1	1	14
Wood workers .....	2							2
Bricklayers .....	3			1				4
Printer .....	1							1
Tailors .....		1	5	1		3	7	17
Bakers .....	1	1	3	1		1	1	8
Barbers .....			3	2		20	1	26
Cobblers .....						7	2	9
Plumbers .....	2		1					3
Glaziers .....		1	1			1		3
Furriers .....			1				2	3
Harness maker .....			1					1
Mandolin maker .....						1		1
Image makers .....						2		2
Bookbinder .....			1					1
Paper-flower makers .....						2		2
Seamstresses .....	2	5						7
Finishers of trousers .....						2		2
Cooks .....	5	1						6
<i>Mercantile.</i>								
Saloonkeepers .....	9	12	6	6	3	9	7	52
Bartenders, lunchmen, etc. ....	8	1	1	2		7		19
Store-keepers .....	2	4	33	19	2	13	22	95
Fruit-stand dealers .....			1					1
Peddlers and venders .....	1		1			6	4	12
Salesmen .....	5	2	1				1	9
Newsdealers .....	1			1				2
Coal and ice dealers .....		1	3					4
Speculators (on river and in market) .....	2							2

TABLE 17—Continued.

OCCUPATION.	NATIONALITIES.							Total Leading Nation- alities.
	Ameri- can.	Irish.	Ger- man.	Pol- ish.	Rus- sian.	Ital- ian.	Jew- ish.	
<i>Miscellaneous and special.</i>								
Telegraph operator	1							1
Electrician	1							1
Undertaker	1					1		2
Druggist	1							1
Clerks and bookkeepers	9	4	4			1		18
Priest					1			1
Teachers	1	1					1	3
Musicians						2		2
Actress	1							1
Railroad superintendent	1							1
Conductors	4							4
Agents	1					1		2
Solicitors, collectors, inspectors and weighmasters	3	1					1	5
Policemen	2	1				1		4
Letter-carriers	2							2
Keeper intelligence office			1					1
Manager telegraph office		1						1
City firemen	2							2
Manufacturers		1	2			1	2	6
Piano tuner			1					1
Stewards	2		1					3
Captains	7	4	3					14
Pilots	4							4
Take boarders		3	2					5
Nurse		1						1
Dyers			1	1				2
Professional beggar						1		1
Retired landlords	9	7	1	1		1		19
<i>Totals.</i>								
Not working	13	30	11	30	2	14		100
Unknown	3	9	3	5		4		24
Unskilled	170	260	182	419	92	239	7	1,369
Skilled	98	45	59	31	1	50	16	300
Mercantile	28	20	46	28	5	35	34	196
Miscellaneous and special	52	24	16	2	1	8	5	108
All	364	388	317	515	101	350	62	2,097

Again, the Germans are seen to lead all save the Jews in mercantile pursuits, in which 14.5 per cent of them are engaged. Next, it is interesting to note, come the Italians with 10.8 per cent; while of the Americans but 7.7 per cent, and of the Irish but 5.1 per cent are storekeepers, etc., the last a slightly lower percentage than is found even among the Poles and Russians.

The field for speculation and discussion in regard to the occupations of the various nationalities, their significance as indications of race character, etc., is seen to be a wide one. Considering the complexity of the subject and the only too evident faults of the

classification employed, it need hardly be said that the suggestions which have been made are to be regarded as tentative only. In a general way, however, the proportion between unskilled laborers on the one hand and skilled, mercantile and special workers on the other, is of unquestionable significance in estimating the industrial standing of the various nationalities considered.

A complete comparison of the living environment of the different nationalities considered would involve a vast number of elements. Some few conclusions may, however, be drawn from the facts presented in the tables which follow. From Table 18 it will be noted

TABLE 18.—CLASSIFICATION OF RENTS PAID PER MONTH.

NATIONALITIES.	\$12 or Over.	\$10 to \$12.	\$8 to \$10.	\$6 to \$9.	Under \$6.	AVERAGE RENT PAID.		Average Number of Rooms Per Apartment.	Total Number of Apart- ments.
						Per Apartment.	Per Room.		
American .....	60	55	72	76	41	\$9 02	\$2 44	3.65	304
Irish .....	40	78	68	82	39	8 89	2 38	3.68	316
German .....	57	45	78	63	18	9 34	2 48	3.76	261
Polish .....	7	15	77	247	118	6 65	2 06	3.22	464
Russian .....	2	3	5	45	40	6 30	2 21	2.85	95
Italian .....	0	4	19	73	202	5 02	1 66	3.03	298
Jewish .....	8	4	9	15	5	8 37	2 35	3.56	41
Other nationalities.						8 40	2 40	3.49	173
Total all nationalities						\$7 66	\$2 23	3.37	1952

that whether measured by average number of rooms per apartment (3.76), average monthly rent per apartment (\$9.34) or average rent per room (\$2.48), the German nationality would seem to be the best housed; though the Americans and the Irish follow closely after. Of the nationalities separately considered the Jewish ranks next after the Irish in respect to size and character (measured by rent) of accommodations; though slightly below the group classified as "other nationalities." Jersey City contains no distinctively Jewish quarter, and the scattered families whose house records are grouped together here are so few as hardly to furnish a safe basis for generalization.

At the lowest extreme, as to size of apartments, we find the Russians, the average number of whose rooms falls slightly below

<sup>11</sup> All owned apartments, also all apartments occupied by janitors or rented with stores, etc., are necessarily omitted from this classification.

three (2.85), and is thus even lower than that of the Italians (3.03), and considerably less than that of the Poles (3.22). The average rent paid by the Russians, however (\$6.06), lies between that paid by the Poles and that paid by the Italians (\$5.02). The average rent per room paid by the Italian is, it will be observed, conspicuously less than that paid by the Pole,—the difference being forty cents per month, while that between the Pole and the American is but thirty-eight cents; yet the difference between the average numbers of rooms per apartment is much greater in the case of the American and the Pole than in that of the Pole and the Italian. The fact that the mass of Italians is concentrated at some little distance from the industrial centres of the city, while the Poles have settled as near them as possible, is probably one cause of the lower rent paid by the former; though it is also unquestionably true that the houses of the Italian district are in even worse repair and are even less frequently properly kept by owners or janitors than are those occupied by the Poles. On the other hand, the high rent per room paid by the Americans, Irish and Germans as compared with that paid by the Poles is due not at all to location but solely to differences in accommodations, especially as to water-closets, sinks, etc., and to differences in maintenance and housekeeping. The fact that Russians, Poles and Italians are largely crowded into rear houses, where rents are generally lower than in those opening directly on the street, must also be taken into account in comparing the average rents paid by them with those paid by the other leading nationalities, who are seldom found in these rear houses.

Averages, however, do not give so vivid an idea of the real state of affairs as does the classification of rents paid between certain limits. From this it will be seen that the range of living condition among the Americans, Irish and Germans is very wide, a large proportion of families paying \$12 or more for their apartments, while in some cases as much as \$18, \$20 or even \$25 is paid. A large majority of Russians and Poles, on the other hand, pay under \$8 and but seven families \$12 or more; while the great mass of Italians pay less than \$6 per apartment, and in no case does an Italian family pay as much as \$12.

The question whether rents paid in a given city are high or low is a difficult one to answer, except in extreme cases. In New York \$10 to \$15 is commonly paid for three rooms in the typical dumbbell



tenement, while \$12 to \$18 is paid for four rooms,—an average in each case of \$3 or more per room. These are said to be the highest rents paid for such accommodations in any city of the world, and represent, as a rule, over one-fourth the income of the tenant. In Chicago, according to the facts stated in the report of the recent investigation of the City Homes Company, the rents in certain sections are strikingly low,—averages for different nationalities ranging between \$4.92 and \$8.28 per apartment and from \$1.40 to \$2.12 per room. The averages, however, are evidently not regarded by those presenting them as representative of the tenement districts of the city as a whole, whose averages would doubtless be considerably higher.

Jersey City would seem to lie somewhere between these two extremes. Where rents are lowest, as in the Italian district, they are nearly the same as those in the Chicago houses, and conditions, especially the prevalence of dilapidated wooden houses, of rear houses, of conspicuously bad sanitary conditions, of unpaved streets, etc., resemble those in the Chicago districts mentioned; while in parts of District I the rents in tall brick buildings more nearly approach those paid in New York.

One fact already noted incidentally is of interest in this connection,—the fact that the owner of a tenement house is not infrequently found living in one of the apartments of that house. Table 19 shows

TABLE 19.—RESIDENT OWNERS OF HOUSES, BY NATIONALITIES

DISTRICT.	American.	Irish.	German.	Polish.	Italian.	Jewish.	Other Nationalities.	Total.
I .....	15	14	16	4	0	3	0	52
II .....	5	10	2	5	2	0	4	28
III .....	6	8	3	0	14	0	0	31
All districts..	26	32	21	9	16	3	4	111

the number of such owners interviewed in the course of the investigation. In all 111 houses are seen to belong to resident owners, that is, more than one-fifth of the houses investigated. As a number of these landlords own two or more houses, while a number of other houses are owned by landlords in neighboring streets, the actual number of houses managed by owners practically resident is considerably greater. As a rule, these owners, living side by side with

their tenants, do not noticeably differ from the latter in degree of education or general intelligence. Their ownership of the house they live in would seem to be in most cases the result of thrift and saving rather than the result of any special advantages,—except, indeed, where it is an inheritance. This fact must undoubtedly influence the character of legislation to remedy faults in existing houses; since a considerable proportion of the owners affected belong to the same class as the tenants whose condition it is desired to improve. It still remains true, however, that the vast majority of the owners of the tenement houses covered by the investigation live at a distance, frequently outside the city, and take very little personal interest in the management of their property, leaving it in many cases to be managed for them by agents.

It will be seen that the number of Irishmen owning the houses in which they live is slightly greater than the number of Americans or Germans, the difference, however, being so slight as to possess little or no significance. It is evident, however, that the Italians are far more given to acquiring property rights than are the Poles, sixteen Italian owners being found, while but nine out of a number of Poles outnumbering the Italians almost two to one, own the houses in which they live. This fact is perhaps due to the greater degree of individual initiative and business ability which, judging from their more varied occupations, the Italians seem to possess.

There remains to be discussed one more table, Table 20, which

TABLE 20.—CLEANLINESS OF APARTMENTS BY NATIONALITIES.

NATIONALITIES.	CLEAN.		FAIRLY CLEAN.		DIRTY.		VERY DIRTY.		Total.
	No.	P. Ct.	No.	P. Ct.	No.	P. Ct.	No.	P. Ct.	
American .....	184	55.2	91	27.3	49	14.7	9	2.7	333
Irish .....	171	50.4	91	26.8	63	18.5	14	4.1	339
German .....	169	56.9	76	25.5	44	14.8	8	2.6	297
Polish .....	163	34.4	131	28.0	147	31.6	23	4.9	464
Russian .....	21	21.0	33	33.0	38	38.0	8	8.0	100
Italian .....	72	21.6	86	25.8	151	45.3	24	7.2	333
Jewish .....	13	23.6	17	30.9	23	41.8	2	3.6	55
All other nationalities ..	102	58.6	38	21.8	28	16.0	6	1.8	174
All nationalities .....	895	42.7	563	26.8	543	25.9	94	4.4	2,095 <sup>18</sup>

gives the results of an examination of apartments in respect to cleanliness. The Germans and Americans show the largest proportion of

<sup>18</sup> Cleanliness statistics in the first block investigated were not uniformly gathered, the schedules then used being somewhat experimental in character.

clean and fairly clean apartments, only 17.4 per cent of all the apartments occupied by each being classed as dirty or very dirty. Then come the Irish with 22.6 per cent dirty or very dirty, and after them the Poles with 36.5 per cent, the Russians with 42 per cent, and the Jews with 45.4 per cent; while of the apartments occupied by Italians more than half, or 52.5 per cent, were found to be dirty or very dirty.

These results are in no way surprising to any one at all familiar with conditions among the different nationalities. It is, nevertheless, really remarkable that a people living huddled together as do the Poles in tiny apartments, with families oftentimes so large as to require the occupancy of the kitchen for sleeping purposes, should show more than 60 per cent of clean or fairly clean apartments. The stainless immaculate kitchen floors throughout many a Polish tenement house are striking evidence of the housewifely zeal of the women of the race; and the many little devices to brighten and beautify the rooms—figured cotton curtains at the open doorways, vivid masses of home-made paper flowers arranged in vases on the mantel, unbroken ranks of brilliant hued saints in gilt frames about the walls, cages of canaries,—all bear witness to their home-loving and home-making natures. Nor are such characteristics by any means lacking among the Italians, though a far less conspicuous feature of their home life.

The subject of overcrowding may well be referred to again in this connection merely to emphasize once more the relation which overcrowding bears to the life of certain nationalities. As has been pointed out, and as may be seen by a comparison of the tables of nationalities with those showing average number of occupants per room and allowance of air per occupant in the apartments, overcrowding is commonest among the Poles, Russians and Italians,—the three people among whom the standard of living is lowest, whose occupations (with certain exceptions) are most uncertain and require least skill, and among whom the custom of taking boarders is most common.

## CHAPTER VI

### REMEDIAL EFFORTS

Two leading facts were noted in the introductory chapter regarding the Jersey City housing situation. First, there is a conspicuous lack, as compared with certain other cities, of government regulation whether of new or of already existing tenement houses; and second, there is an absence of interest in the subject among all classes of citizens, and hence an absence not only of demand for reform by legislation, but of any sort of private or corporate attempts to improve conditions. It is evident that only through the rousing of interest can any permanent improvement in conditions be brought about, since without a strong pressure of public opinion reform legislation cannot be secured or enforced. It is evident also that interest once roused must find definite forms into which to turn its energies, else they will be spent in unavailing protest.

What are the reasons for governmental regulation of housing condition? On what principles, and within what limitations, may government interference properly be exerted?

Mr. Robert W. De Forest, Tenement House Commissioner of New York City, in an article on "Tenement House Regulation," published in *THE ANNALS* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science for July, 1902, says:

"The reasons for tenement regulation may be roughly classed as follows: The protection of property rights in adjacent property. Such is the reason for requiring fire-proof construction in whole or in part. Such is the chief reason for limitations of height and for leaving an obligatory open space at the rear of each house so as to preserve thorough ventilation for the block. The protection of neighbors and the community from unsanitary conditions, by which they might be affected or which might breed contagion. Under this class fall the great body of sanitary law and tenement house regulation of a sanitary kind. That all legislation which falls within these classes can be justified as a proper restraint on the liberty and property rights of some, in order to protect and preserve the property rights and liberty of others, is clear.

"There is another and increasing class of regulations intended to protect the life and health of those who cannot, it is supposed, protect themselves by any means within their control. Fire-escapes, which are almost uni-

versally required by law in non-fire-proof tenement houses, belong to this class. . . . Of such class also is the law requiring that there be a separate water-closet for each apartment, as in New York, or for every two families, as in Detroit and elsewhere, and that lights be kept burning in public halls at night. . . . It may be answered that they [the tenants] need not rent rooms in houses not furnished with separate water-closets, and the halls of which are not kept lighted, unless they wish to, and that they should not be restricted in their liberty to rent rooms in such houses, it may be at a lower rent, if they so desire. The reply may be, and in some cities would properly be, that they would have no choice unless the law intervened to protect them. Moreover, it might be urged that in the provision for separate water-closets for each apartment, and in the lighting of public halls, there was an element of protection to public health and morals in which the community had an interest, and which the community by regulation should ensure."

Government activity has taken widely varying forms in different places. In certain English cities not only have vast schemes of expropriation and the destruction of existing properties been set on foot, but the construction of model houses by municipalities has been largely undertaken. It is hardly worth while for us at present to go in detail into such schemes, so manifestly inapplicable are they to conditions in Jersey City; for a pure and non-partisan administration on sound business principles and a highly developed social consciousness in the community are essentials for carrying out such undertakings, involving as they do the handling of vast sums of money and a close knowledge of most complex conditions. Under any circumstances the wisdom of municipal construction and ownership is exceedingly doubtful. Bowmaker, in the "Housing of the Working Classes" says of private companies for the erection of model houses in England, "It is almost universally admitted that they have proved more successful in this work than public authorities and certainly more so than public trusts"; while Mr. De Forest is most emphatic as to the inapplicability of such schemes to the situation in American cities, pointing out that model tenements erected by municipalities "will furnish no better demonstration than private benevolence has furnished in the past and can be relied upon to furnish in the future" of "what can be done to provide better housing conditions," and will furthermore, while housing but a small proportion of the city's working population, "prevent the greater number from being effectually housed by other means, for private enter-

prise will not compete with municipal bounty, and when cities begin to build tenements, other tenement building will cease."<sup>13</sup>

Leaving out of account, then, municipal construction and ownership of houses, we find that government control of tenement conditions has been exercised chiefly along four lines. First, under conditions where existing properties have come to be a menace to tenants or neighbors, houses have been destroyed, with compensation to owners. Second, modifications of existing houses have been required to render them more safe and healthful. Third, new houses constructed have been required to conform to certain definite regulations. And fourth, regular inspection and supervision of houses has been carried on, with varying degrees of system and effectiveness. It will be profitable to take up these forms of activity in turn, noting in each case the situation in Jersey City in respect to each.

In England especially liberal powers of dealing with unhealthy houses are possessed by the local authorities. Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1891, not only individual houses, but whole tracts of houses may be demolished, and a complete rearrangement of the district required. Power is also given to deal with "obstructive buildings"—buildings which, though not themselves unfit for habitation, "stop ventilation or otherwise make or conduce to make other buildings injurious to health, or prevent proper measures being carried into effect for remedying any nuisance injurious to health";<sup>14</sup> it being thus made "possible to open out narrow courts or alleys, or otherwise rearrange congested areas." This act is made practically effective by the thoroughly business-like manner in which it arranges for compensation. "Not only are allowances to be made for the increased rental obtained by letting the house in such an overcrowded condition as to be dangerous to health, but the estimated cost of placing the premises in reasonably good repair is to be deducted, while should there be no possibility of effecting any improvement, the only allowance to be made is the value of the land and of the materials of the buildings thereon." It is noted as one result of this method of determining compensation, that "owners, recognizing the possibilities which are thus opened up, have been stimulated to considerable activity, and are endeavoring to effect such improvements as may be necessary."

<sup>13</sup> Report of Tenement House Commission of New York, 1900.

<sup>14</sup> "Housing of the Working Classes," by Edward Bowmaker, M. D.

In the United States laws were adopted by New York in 1895 and by Massachusetts in 1897 modelled in some degree upon the Housing of the Working Classes Act, though far less radical in character. In the words of Jacob A. Riis, the New York law "provides for the seizure of buildings that are dangerous to public health, or unfit for human habitation, and destruction upon proper proof, with compensation to the owner, on a sliding scale down to entire unfitness, when he is entitled to the value of the material in his house."<sup>15</sup>

No power of this sort is possessed by authorities in Jersey City. Buildings unfit for human habitation may be ordered vacated, but cannot be destroyed. A number of such abandoned houses in different parts of the city are bitterly complained of by neighboring house owners and tenants as serious nuisances. Furthermore, of the houses investigated, forty-five were noted as being in very bad repair, and eleven as dilapidated and apparently unfit for habitation, walls and floors in several cases sloping at dizzying angles, while stairs, walls and roofs are badly broken or leaking. It is evident that the vigorous exercise of powers like those possessed by the New York authorities is greatly needed in Jersey City.

Power is likewise vested in local authorities in England to require landlords to put houses in proper repair; while the New York Tenement House Act of 1901 enters into considerable detail in regard to required modifications of existing tenements. Thus, all such tenements, as well as those hereafter constructed, must have proper fire-escapes directly accessible to each apartment; rooms, to be inhabited, must at least have windows of stated size upon adjoining rooms in the same apartment; hallways, where so dark that one cannot read in them, must be lighted by glass panels in apartment doors or windows to rooms or to the outer air; privies and school-sinks must be removed from yards by a certain date, and proper individual closets substituted, at least one such closet in all existing houses to be provided for every two families; and there are further requirements in regard to impervious flooring for cellars, proper bulkheads or scuttles, and so forth.

Requirements of this sort are especially needed in Jersey City. Many even of the older and badly constructed houses could be materially improved at slight expense. On all the points noted above, as

<sup>15</sup> "A Ten Years' War," by Jacob A. Riis.

well as on many others, the application of provisions similar to those of the New York law would work great good. Statistics given in the preceding chapters indicate the need which exists in Jersey City of just such regulations. The fact that little tenement construction is going on here from year to year makes improvement in existing houses seem the more imperative, since there is little prospect that existing buildings will soon be torn down to make way for new ones.

In regard to the control of new tenement houses, effective regulations adapted to local needs are in force in a number of American cities, and other communities are rapidly awaking to the need of such laws. The New York tenement house of 1901 marks unquestionably the highest point reached by legislation on these subjects; though on certain points, as the percentage of lots that may be covered, more stringent requirements may properly be enforced in communities where tenement house construction is less advanced. In general, adequate provision for ventilation by courts of prescribed size, upon which all rooms not opening to street or yard must have windows; adequate fire-proof construction and fire-escape provision; thoroughly sound and complete sanitary construction of all sorts should be required. Plans should be passed upon, and inspection of completed buildings made, to see that the law has been conformed with, before occupation of buildings for the first time is permitted. The number of prospective builders of tenement houses in Jersey City being comparatively small, no very powerful interests would, it seems probable, be arrayed against the passage of a law making reasonable requirements in regard to tenement houses hereafter constructed; and there seems no good reason to suppose that a vigorous and well organized movement in favor of such a law would not succeed.

Even were the fullest powers given in regard to the destruction of unhealthy houses, the modification of existing buildings and the control of the construction of new ones, the work of reform would still be incomplete and would remain largely ineffective unless provision were made for an adequate inspecting force. In the great majority of American cities, Jersey City among them, the force of sanitary inspectors is so small that all their time is taken up with the investigation of complaints made to the department. The ignorance of tenants, especially foreigners, as to the possibility of securing



correction of bad conditions by application to the boards of health, and the fear which is felt of angering landlords unite to prevent the reporting of many most flagrant abuses. It is evident to any one at all familiar with conditions, that regular and thorough inspection of houses and premises in Jersey City is if possible even more needed than new laws. Unspeakable conditions of filth in cellars, halls, yards, privies and alley spaces between rear houses were found; cellar and basement rooms are occupied in defiance of the law; fire-escapes and ladders to scuttles are so obstructed as to be useless; and overcrowding in apartments goes on unchecked. Without an adequate inspecting force officials are to a great extent powerless to prevent such conditions, however good the laws on the statute books, and should not be hastily blamed by a public with whom the ultimate responsibility rests.

The subject of overcrowding, to which reference has just been made, has received especially careful attention in various English and continental cities. The method used in Glasgow, that of measuring apartments containing less than a certain number of rooms, and placing on the door a ticket with the maximum number that may occupy the apartment, has already been referred to in the chapter on overcrowding. Such an important part of the general subject of inspection, however, is inspection to prevent overcrowding, that methods used may properly be dwelt upon again here. The London Public Health Act of 1891 makes obligatory in the forty sanitary districts of London the enforcement of certain methods against overcrowding whose application had before been merely optional, and which had been effectively enforced in very few of the districts. Under this act apartments occupied by members of more than one family are to be measured and the number of persons who may sleep in each room determined, 300 cubic feet per adult in rooms used exclusively for sleeping purposes and 400 cubic feet in rooms used for other purposes as well being required. Such apartments must be registered and inspections made from time to time to learn conditions.

In New York the minimum limit of cubic air space is, as in Glasgow, 400 cubic feet. A scheme for licensing tenements which has been urged with much force would undoubtedly aid in the control of overcrowding as in the control of sanitary conditions generally. The danger of losing their license would probably cause

landlords to investigate with some care the habits of tenants; while the department charged with the enforcement of the law would be able to deal more effectively with the owner, representing an entire house, than with the migratory tenant. Vigorous enforcement of the law now on the statute books is greatly needed in Jersey City, and public opinion should insist that some effective means of enforcing it be devised and put in operation.

Organized private efforts for improved housing run parallel to the last three lines of governmental activity discussed. Companies for the construction and management of model tenements; associations for the purchase and remodelling of existing houses; and sanitary associations to supplement the work of public officials, are the three most important forms of private organization. We shall discuss each in turn briefly.

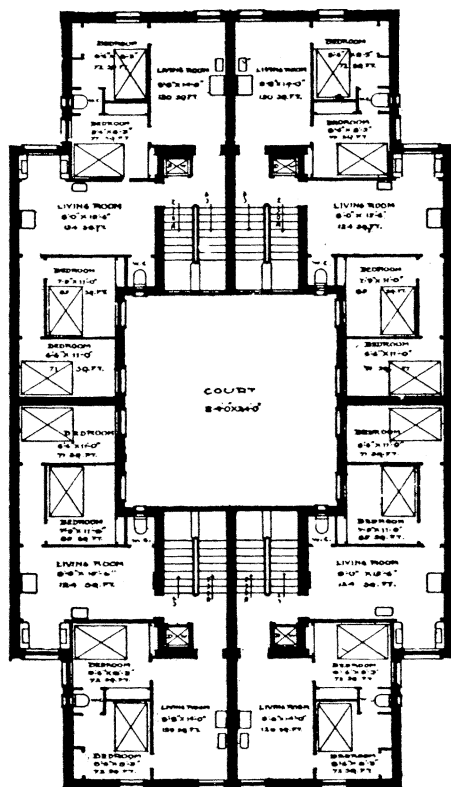
In London and other English cities there are large numbers of housing construction companies, representing millions of invested capital; while in most of the large American cities of the East similar companies have been organized. It is impossible here to go into points of construction or management. The most important thing to be emphasized is a fact which has been amply proved,—the commercial profitableness of tenement houses constructed with the highest regard to the welfare of tenants. Mr. E. L. R. Gould, the authority on this branch of the housing subject in America, said in an article published in *Charities*, February, 1900, that "upward of one hundred millions of dollars have been invested in improved housing in the largest European and American cities; and 88 per cent, that is, eighty-eight million dollars, is now earning and has always earned a commercial profit. Six per cent, that is six million dollars, has returned a savings bank rate of interest, and only six million dollars out of the whole hundred million dollars have been invested less profitably." Bowmaker in the *The Housing of the Working Classes* says that "in the provision of dwellings for the people not only can a substantial profit be made, but a lasting boon conferred on thousands of fellow creatures. . . . That this has been most profitably carried out, may be seen from a consideration of the work of various existing companies. . . . Probably this is mainly due to the second commercial principles on which they work,—the provision of healthy dwellings and of such reasonable accommodations and comforts as are consistent with strict economy and remunerative returns."

The two enterprises of this sort which have been most conspicuously successful in New York, and which are thus available as examples for any one planning to undertake such work in Jersey City, are the houses of Mr. Alfred T. White in Brooklyn and those erected by the City and Suburban Homes Company in Manhattan. The former, known as the Tower and the Riverside Buildings, have paid regularly 6 per cent on the investment made; and though built more than twenty years ago,<sup>16</sup> are in perfect condition and the most attractive specimens of model tenements known to the writer. The latter, which pay regularly 5 per cent interest, are also very attractive, and are especially well managed, besides providing certain special conveniences, such as a liberal supply of baths for the use of tenants. If the building of model tenement houses on a smaller scale is to be undertaken in Jersey City, those interested could hardly do better than to begin with a study of those portions of the New York tenement house law which relate to tenement houses hereafter erected; since, on the one hand, buildings erected under that law are in all essential respects "model" tenements, while on the other hand, the profitableness of such houses, in New York, at least, has been fully demonstrated both by the estimates of architects and builders consulted before the passage of the law, and by the confidence and vigor with which construction under it is now proceeding. The accompanying plan, chosen from a large number prepared for the Tenement House Commission of 1900 by leading architects, and published in its report,<sup>17</sup> shows one type of buildings which can be constructed under the new code on twenty-five and fifty foot lots. Any one who will acquaint himself with the part played by Mr. White and his model buildings in the reform movement of the seventies in New York will realize how great an influence examples of improved housing may exert for betterment of conditions in the city as a whole.

In the work of remodelling and managing existing property, Miss Octavia Hill, of London, has shown what can be done, and her example has been followed by several individual workers and associations in this country. The three most important features of her work are: first, the acquiring of old and dilapidated property and its thorough repair; second, personal supervision and management; and third, the carrying out of the work on sound commercial prin-

<sup>16</sup> The Riverside buildings are of a later date.

<sup>17</sup> "Report of Tenement House Commission of New York," 1900.

ONE POSSIBLE TYPE OF MODEL TENEMENT <sup>18</sup>

Ernest Flagg, Architect.

Plan for 50 ft. lot or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of it for 25 ft. lot.

ciples. Expressed in her own words, her main object was "to free a few people from the tyranny and influence of a low class of landlords and landladies; from the corrupting influence of continually enforced communication with very degraded fellow lodgers; from the heavy incubus of accumulated dirt; so that the never-dying hope which I find characteristic of the poor might have leave to spring, and with it such energy as might help them to help themselves. I had not great ideas of what might be done for them, my strongest endeavors were to be used to rouse habits of industry and

<sup>18</sup> From Report of New York Tenement House Commission of 1900.

effort, without which they must finally sink—with which they might render themselves independent of me, except as a friend and helper.”<sup>19</sup> Miss Hill’s book on the “Homes of the London Poor,” is most interesting and profitable reading. Nearer home an excellent example of the same sort of work is furnished by the Octavia Hill Association of Philadelphia, where two paid agents and three volunteer collectors have been at work during the past year managing the thirty-three houses owned by the association and the fifty-three others which they administer. Such work would be especially suited to meet conditions in Jersey City, where neglect is responsible for so large a share of the evils that exist. The comment which the secretary of the Philadelphia association makes on their experience with certain new properties recently taken in charge by them in an Italian quarter is of interest in this connection. She writes (in the annual report of the Association for 1901): “The occupants have responded with grateful appreciation hitherto quite unprecedented, to the efforts of the collectors in their behalf. The houses have been for three months under care, and not a cent of rent remains unpaid.” So well does this opinion of the responsiveness of Italian character agree with that expressed by many settlement and other workers in Italian quarters, that it seems certain that an excellent field for the sort of work outlined above is offered by the region in Jersey City known as “Little Italy.”

The third field of endeavor in which effective work for the betterment of housing conditions has been done by associations of private citizens is that of sanitary inspection. In Edinburgh the inspectors of the Social and Sanitary Society make systematic inspections and report housing and sanitary evils to the municipal authorities. In London every district is covered in the same way. Similar work on a smaller scale has been done in many places, as in the neighboring town of Orange, N. J., during the present year. No work is more needed in Jersey City. An association employing one or more inspectors could not only work a great improvement in present conditions, but could exert an immense educational influence in the community, having at its command a store of information on actual conditions by which it could compel public attention and thus aid in securing increased powers for municipal departments and a more adequate force of official workers.

<sup>19</sup> “Homes of the London Poor,” by Miss Octavia Hill.

A number of lines of possible activity have been suggested in the foregoing pages. The literature of housing reform is varied and full of interest. The bibliographical list appended offers various points of departure for those wishing to inform themselves further concerning practical work along these lines. It is confidently hoped that when once the serious housing and sanitary conditions prevailing in the city are realized, public spirited citizens will be roused to activity and an effective movement for reform will be inaugurated.

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## APPENDICES

### I

#### SCHEDULES USED IN THE INVESTIGATION

#### HOUSING CONDITIONS IN JERSEY CITY

##### GENERAL HOUSE CARD.

Date .....Street and No. ....  
Size of lot? .....  
Percentage of lot occupied?.....  
Location of buildings on lot? .....  
Distance between? .....  
Material of house? .....  
State of repair? .....  
Width of building? .....  
Depth of building? .....  
No. of stories? .....  
No. of apartments? .....  
No. vacant apartments? .....  
No. of rooms? .....  
No. vacant rooms? .....  
No. of inhabitants? .....  
No. of persons over 14 years? .....  
No. of children from 5 to 14 years? .....  
No. children under 5 years? .....  
Total cubic air space in apartments? .....  
Average cubic air space per person? .....  
Business conducted on premises? .....  
Owner's name and address? .....  
Janitor on premises? .....  
Capable? .....  
Photograph of any part of premises desirable? .....

## HOUSING CONDITIONS IN JERSEY CITY

## SUPPLEMENTARY HOUSE CARD

Date ..... Street and No. ....  
 PUBLIC HALLWAYS. Width? .....  
 How lighted by day? .....  
 How lighted by night? .....  
 How ventilated? .....  
 No. families using on each floor? .....  
 Cleanliness of? .....  
 Odors? .....  
 Front door locked? .....  
 PROVISION IN CASE OF FIRE. Fire escapes? .....  
 Material and construction? .....  
 Balconies encumbered? .....  
 No. apartments having a window on balcony? .....  
 Scuttle or bulkhead through roof? .....  
 How locked? .....  
 Ladder—Material? Fixed? .....  
 CELLAR OR BASEMENT. Height? .....  
 Height above ground? .....  
 Floor water-tight and how? .....  
 Walls and floor damp? .....  
 Cleanliness of? .....  
 How ventilated? .....  
 Use made of? .....  
 Separate entrance from street? .....  
 YARD. Size? .....  
 How drained? .....  
 How paved? .....  
 Cleanliness of? .....  
 GARBAGE BOX. Kind? .....  
 Condition? .....  
 Location? .....  
 Collection? .....

## HOUSING CONDITIONS IN JERSEY CITY

## SANITATION AND WATER SUPPLY CARD

Date .....Street and No. ....

Are water closets, privies, or school sinks used? .....

No. on premises? .....

No. families using each? .....

Are compartments kept locked? .....

Are compartments lighted at night? .....

Location? .....

Condition? .....

Ventilation? .....

How constructed? .....

Space under seat open or enclosed? .....

Are closets trapped? .....

Are pipes vented? .....

Does vent pipe extend through roof? .....

Source of water supply? .....

Adequacy of water supply? .....

Sewer connection and how? .....

If no connection, how waste disposed of? .....

Is cess pool used? .....

How constructed? .....

Tight or leaching? .....

Location and distance from house? .....

On higher or lower ground? .....

Water supply—No. fixtures? .....

Location? .....

Kind? .....

Adequacy of supply? .....

Bathing facilities—No. fixtures? .....

Location? .....

Kind? .....

## HOUSING CONDITIONS IN JERSEY CITY

## APARTMENT CARD

Date ..... Street and No. ....  
 Location of apartment in house? .....  
 Rent of apartment? .....

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total.
No. rooms? .....							
Use? .....							
Floor dimensions? .....							
Height? .....							
Cubic air space? .....							
No. of windows? .....							
Size of windows? .....							
Source of light? .....							
Light or dark? .....							
How ventilated? .....							
Cleanliness? .....							
No. families occupying apartment? .....							
No. persons occupying apartment? .....							
No. persons over 14 years? .....							
No. children 5 to 14 years? .....							
No. children under 5 years? .....							
No. of lodgers or boarders? .....							
Average cubic air space per person? .....							
No. lodgers or boarders? .....							
No. rooms actually used for sleeping? .....							
Any manufacture carried on in rooms? .....							
No. persons engaged in? .....							
Hours during which carried on? .....							
Occupation of head of family? .....							
Nationality of head of family? .....							
Length of residence in U. S.? .....							
Length of residence in this house? .....							

## II

POPULATION AND AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILIES, BY BLOCKS

DISTRICT AND BLOCK.		Number Families.	Number Individuals.	Average Number Individuals Per Family.
I.—	1.....	86	453	5.26
	2.....	111	612	5.51
	3.....	160	711	4.44
	4.....	132	684	5.18
	5.....	173	759	4.39
	6.....	152	661	4.34
	7.....	163	785	4.81
	8.....	120	576	4.80
	9.....	93	419	4.50
	10.....	88	411	4.67
Total I .....		1,278	6,071	4.75
II.—	1.....	225	1,079	4.79
	2.....	183	797	4.35
	3.....	95	454	4.67
	4.....	134	583	4.34
Total II .....		637	2,913	4.57
III.—	1.....	53	259	4.88
	2.....	160	785	4.90
	3.....	164	724	4.41
Total III .....		377	1,768	4.68
Total all districts .....		2,292	10,752	4.69

## III

## INSUFFICIENT LIGHTING OF HALLS AT NIGHT

One serious evil of housekeeping which was not mentioned in the body of the report is that of unlighted or inadequately lighted public halls. In the better class of tenement houses in Jersey City the landlord provides gas or lamps in these halls, a light being commonly kept on every other floor, less frequently on every floor, till ten o'clock at night. After this hour all lights seem generally to be extinguished. In the lower grade of tenements arrangements are often made with janitors or with tenants, the landlord supplying lamps and the tenants oil. In a large proportion of cases, however,

the responsibility for lighting halls is left entirely to tenants. Sometimes they arrange among themselves to put out lights alternately; but too frequently agreements are broken by one party, and tenants who are ready to do their share become discouraged and finally give up supplying lights for the convenience of neighbors who refuse to bear their part of the expense. Thus many halls are wholly unlighted at night, except when a tenant occasionally puts out a light to guide the foot-steps of expected guests. Sixty tenement houses (*i. e.*, houses occupied by three or more families) were noted during the investigation, in which, according to the testimony of tenants, the halls were habitually wholly unlighted at night.

The danger of injury from falling on pitch dark stairways need hardly be pointed out. It was further proved by the Tenement House Commission of 1900 in New York that very grave moral evils were associated with unlighted hallways; and in all probability the same dangers result from similar conditions in Jersey City. A law, modelled on that of New York, requiring landlords to provide lights on alternate floors till ten o'clock, and a light on at least one floor during the entire period from sunset to sunrise, is greatly needed in Jersey City.